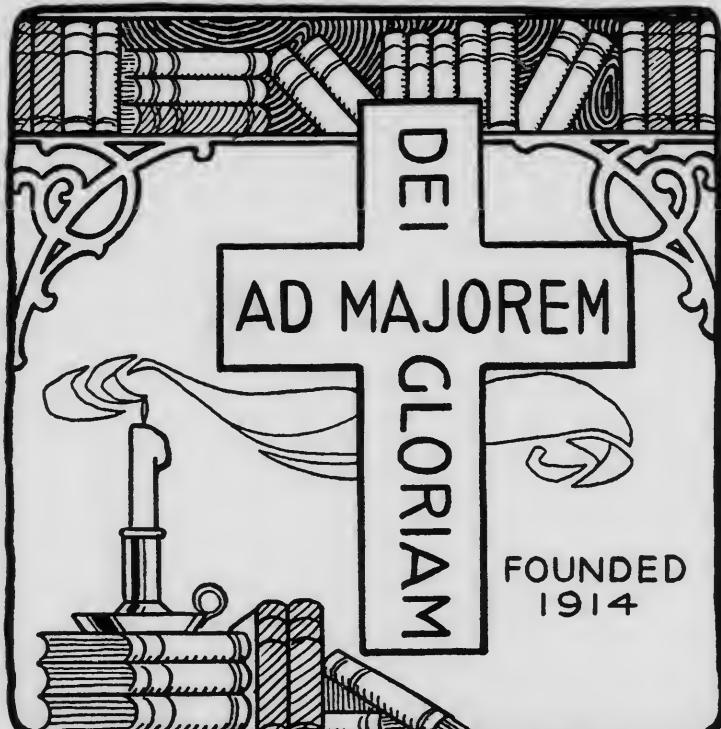


METHODISM
IN
BRADFORD

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Sep. 5. 1841



KIRKGATE BRADFORD.

The entrance to the Dungeon where Nelson was imprisoned
Presented to the Rev W. W. Stamp as an accompaniment to his History of Methodism in Bradford by the artist.

J. Wilson. 28 Kirkgate Bradford.

See page 10

922.7

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HISTORICAL NOTICES

OF

WESLEYAN METHODISM,

IN BRADFORD AND ITS VICINITY.

BY

WILLIAM W. STAMP.



*The Octagon Chapel of Preachers
Houses in Horton Lane.*

A.D. 1766.

MASON, LONDON:

HENRY WARDMAN, BRADFORD.

R. PILTER, HUDDERSFIELD.

MDCCCXLI.

BW73

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Wes. 78

TO THE
WESLEYAN SOCIETIES AND CONGREGATIONS
OF THE
BRADFORD WEST AND EAST CIRCUITS,
THIS ATTEMPT TO TRACE
THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF WESLEYAN METHODISM
IN BRADFORD AND ITS VICINITY,
IN THE EARNEST HOPE,
THAT REMINDED OF "THE OLD TIME BEFORE THEM,"
THEY MAY GRATEFULLY RECOGNIZE
IN THE ESTABLISHMENT, CONSERVATION, AND SPREAD
OF WESLEYAN METHODISM,
The Work of God,
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

Entered at Stationers' Hall.

P R E F A C E.

To the Wesleyan community, it is presumed, no apology will be necessary for the publication of the following pages. Sketches such as the present, do indeed possess a charm and interest limited to the locality to which they refer; yet, to contemplate the now extended work of God in its humble beginnings,—when “small and feeble was the day;”—to view, rescued from unmerited oblivion, names associated with the Wesleyan society, in the infancy of its existence, when in the midst of reproach and persecution, this section of the church gained firm and permanent establishment;—to note the zeal, the self-denying toil, and in many instances the heroic sufferings of “worthies” who have long since “fallen asleep,” and into whose labours we have quietly entered,—cannot but be interesting to all who love our Jerusalem, and who pray for her peace.

In the scene,—twice told, of his honoured Father's ministerial labours,—the birth-place also of the writer, a task of this kind, though involving much toilsome research, has yet been pleasing. He has now but to add, that the gratification thus yielded will be in no trifling measure enhanced, if by these awakened reminiscences of the past, there be excited in the aged members of our Israel, a more distinct and grateful recognition of the “hand of God,” thus over them for good; or, on the part of its junior branches, a more devoted attachment to that wholesome system of doctrine and discipline which Wesleyan Methodism presents.

W. W. S.

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The letter E marks the entrance of the passage leading to the dungeon: two stories under ground, in what are now the cellars of the high building on which the weather vane appears, was the spot of Nelson’s confinement. See also Note B.

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WESLEYAN CHAPEL, KIRKGATE, ERECTED A. D. 1811.



WESLEYAN CHAPEL, EASTBROOK ERECTED A. D. 1825.

Drawn & Engraved by J. WILSON.

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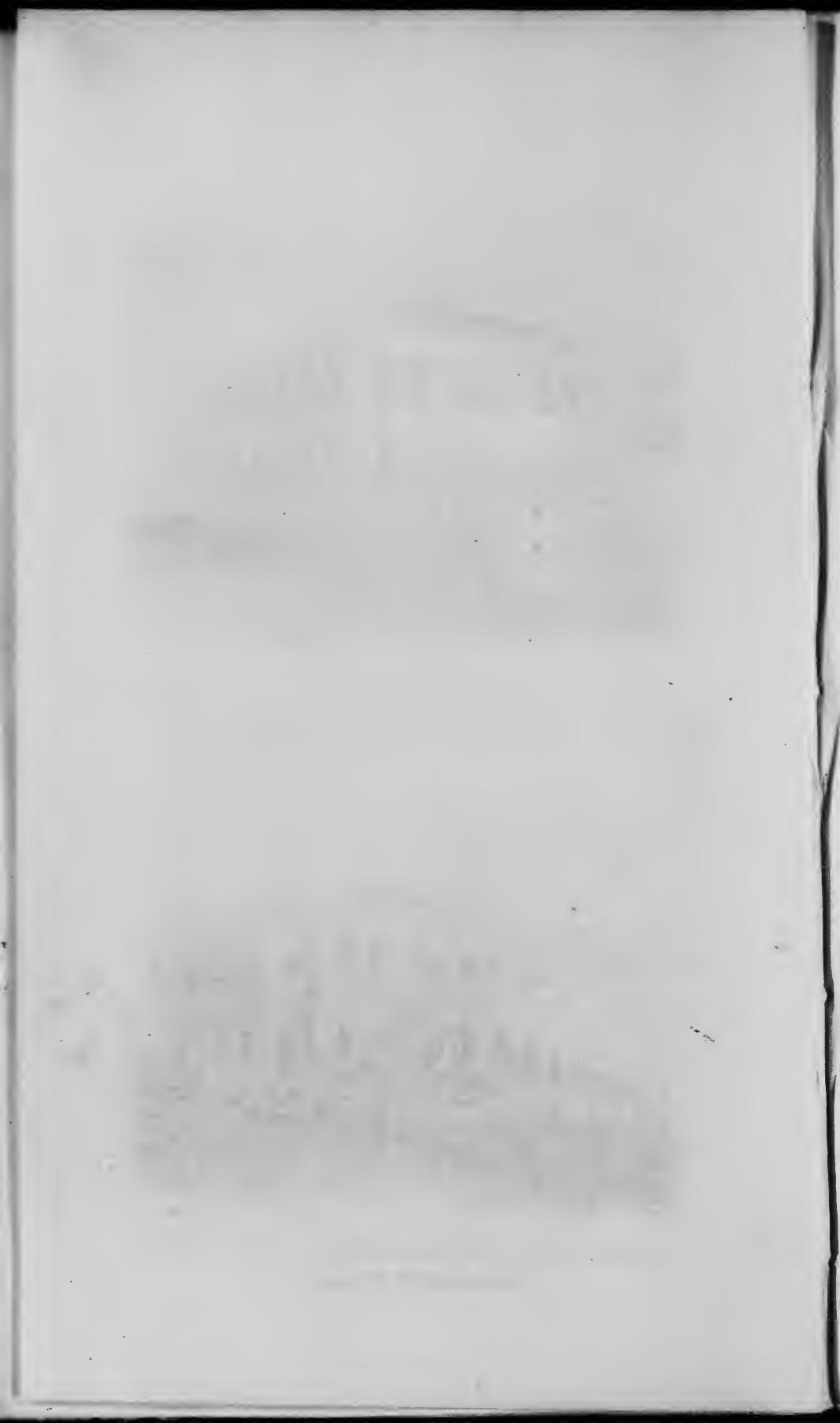


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“THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN,” declares the Founder of our holy religion, “is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”

Perhaps in no section of the Christian Church, has this interesting statement been more fully verified, than in the rise and progress of Wesleyan Methodism, so

called. But one short century ago, the “United* Society,” formed by the apostolic Wesley, amounted only to eight or ten individuals! From that period to the present, how has the seed of the kingdom vegetated, and grown, and been diffused! The returns of the Connexion, in the hundredth year of its existence, present a total, under the care of the British and American Conferences, of upwards of eleven hundred thousand members; exclusive of perhaps twice that number, who constitute its stated congregations; whilst its Ministers, itinerant and superannuated, fall little short of five thousand! “According to this time,” it may be truly said of the tribes of our Israel, “What hath God wrought!” “Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and thy truth’s sake.”

To the eye of the mere philosopher, or the coldly calculating religionist, the establishment and spread of this important section of the church of Christ, may indeed present a phenomenon not easily explained. Such may, perhaps, refer the whole to the enthusiasm of its Founder, and his zealous coadjutors;—to the enforcement of doctrines designedly adapted to awaken the fears, or to inflame the passions of the untutored multitude;—or, to the admirable, the almost military organization which binds and actuates the Methodistic brotherhood: but the link, connecting together cause and effect, is, on suppositions of this kind, lamentably wanting. The case admits of only one solution. Methodism is of God,—God’s especial work; the revival and extension of scriptural Christianity.

“The workmen in England, as the workmen in Judea, had no plan.” The Founder of Methodism, at the commencement of his career, does not appear to

* See note A

have had the remotest idea of establishing any religious sect or party; but, guided by circumstances, which clearly indicated the will of Providence, he was led to deviate from the established order of the church of which he was a minister, and to which he had heretofore tenaciously clung. To listening multitudes in Moorfields, and in the wilds of Kingswood, he proclaimed in the open air the glad-tidings of salvation; sinners were awakened, and multitudes led to inquire, "What must we do?" Then followed the formation of societies,—the admission of lay Helpers in preaching the gospel of Christ,—the erection of preaching-houses, for chapels he allowed them not to be called, and in succession, the whole routine of our ecclesiastical polity. Thus, step by step, arose that noble economy which has already proved so great a blessing to the world; and which, more than any other plan now in operation, is calculated to diffuse scriptural christianity to the ends of the earth.

The introduction of Methodism into Yorkshire appears to have taken place shortly after the formation of the first society in London.

John Nelson, the stone-mason, of Birstal, of whom Dr. Southey bears witness, that "he had as high a spirit, and as brave a heart, as ever Englishman was blessed with;" and whom Mr. Jackson, in his "Centenary of Wesleyan Methodism," truly characterises as "a man of deep and fervent piety, of strong and manly sense, of ready and pungent wit, and of admirable firmness and resolution;" may be justly regarded, so far as Methodism is concerned, as the apostle of the West-Riding. The circumstances attendant on his conversion to God,—his religious experience,—his ministerial labours and sufferings, are given with

admirable simplicity and pithiness in the celebrated “Journal,” which bears his name; and which, to adopt the language of a worthy Methodist minister now in glory, “every Wesleyan Methodist *ought* to read.”

The first attempt of this somewhat unlettered, yet eminent man, to make known “the truth as it is in Jesus,” cannot be better stated than in the words of Mr. Wesley, who thus narrates his first visit to Birstal,* and the rise of Methodism there:

“Tuesday, May 25, 1742.—I set out early in the morning with John Taylor, (since settled in London,) and Wednesday, 26, in the evening reached Birstal, six miles beyond Wakefield.

“John Nelson had wrote to me some time before; but at that time I had little thought of seeing him. Hearing he was at home, I sent for him to our inn, whence he immediately carried me to his house, and gave me an account of the strange manner wherein he

* Several years previous to this, Mr. Wesley had preached in the West-Riding. “The first house,” observes the Rev. Geo. Morley, in an album contribution, “in which Mr. Wesley slept in Yorkshire, was Wentworth House; and the first pulpit he occupied in the same county, was in Wentworth church.

“When Mr. Samuel Wesley, father of Messrs. John and Charles, was writing his Dissertations on the Book of Job, he requested permission to consult the library at Wentworth House. Its noble owner, the Marquis of Rockingham, not only allowed his request, but kindly invited him and any of his sons to reside in the house, as long as he might wish to read, and make extracts from the books. He took (1733) his son John, who was then his curate, as his amanuensis. They remained there nearly a fortnight, and the young Divine preached in Wentworth church.

“The late Mr. Birks, of Thorpe, heard him, and never forgot the preacher. In the last year of his long life, and in the hundredth year of his age, he gave me the above information, and concluded his very interesting narrative with these weighty words—‘The Lord called me when I was very young: he then made me a serious boy, and now he makes me a happy old man.’”

had been led on, from the time of our parting in London.

“ He had full business there, and large wages : but from the time of his finding peace with God, it was continually upon his mind, that he must return, though he knew not why, to his native place. He did so, about Christmas, in the year 1740. His relations and acquaintances soon began to enquire, what he thought of this new faith, and whether he believed there was any such thing as a man’s knowing his sins were forgiven? John told them, point blank, that this new faith as they called it, was the old faith of the gospel ; and that he himself was as sure his sins were forgiven, as he could be of the shining of the sun. This was soon noised abroad ; more and more came to enquire concerning these strange things. Some put him upon the proof of the great truths, which such enquiries naturally led him to mention ; thus, he was brought unawares to quote, explain, compare, and enforce several parts of Scripture. This he did at first, sitting in his house, till the company increased so that the house could not contain them. Then he stood at the door, which he was commonly obliged to do in the evening, as soon as he came from work. God immediately set his seal to what was spoken, several believed, and therefore declared that God was merciful also to their unrighteousness, and had forgiven all their sins.

“ Mr. Ingham, hearing of this, came to Birstal, enquired into the facts, talked with John himself, and examined him in the closest manner, both touching his knowledge and spiritual experience ; after which he encouraged him to proceed ; and pressed him as often as he had opportunity, to come to any of the places where himself had been, and speak to the people as God should enable him.

“ But he soon gave offence, both by his plainness of speech, and by advising people to go to church and sacrament. Mr. Ingham reproved him, but finding him incorrigible, forbade any that were in his societies to hear him. But, being persuaded, this is the will of God concerning him, he continues to this hour, working in the day, that he may be burdensome to no man ; and in the evening testifying the truth as it is in Jesus.”

Mr. Ingham, referred to in the above extract, was one of the original band of Methodists at Oxford, and brother-in-law to the Countess of Huntingdon. He accompanied the Wesleys on their mission to Georgia, and on his return, settled for a while at Osset, his native place, near Dewsbury. He was instrumental in raising up a number of religious societies in that immediate neighbourhood, as well as at Bradford, and Horton. In a letter addressed to Mr. Wesley, bearing date, Osset, Sept. 20, 1740, Mr. Ingham states,—

“ In Yorkshire, the Lord still keeps carrying on his own work. Many souls are truly awakened, and some have obtained mercy. The enemies are engaged against us, but the Lord is our helper. We have great peace, and love, and unity, amongst us. We have no differences, no divisions, no disputings.”

These pleasing prospects, however, soon vanished. Mr. Ingham though previously a zealous defender of the faith and ordinances of the gospel, was caught in the German net; *the spirit of stillness* came over him; his career of usefulness was at once checked, and his societies dwindled away. So extensively was this the case, that in 1759, out of eighty flourishing churches, once under his care, there were only thirteen remaining.

The doctrines of stillness, then maintained by some eminent ministers of the Moravian church, agitated at a very early period the Wesleyan societies. These strangely taught, that till men had true faith, they ought to be still—to abstain from the appointed means of grace; such as the ministration of the word, —the supper of our Lord,—the exercises of the closet, &c:—That, to search the Scriptures,—to pray, or to communicate, was seeking salvation by works; and that, till these were laid aside, no man could receive faith! Against notions thus delusive, the following verses first published in 1755, and now forming part of the 295th hymn of our general Hymn Book, were doubtless intended to guard the Wesleyan flock:—

“ Come, ye followers of the Lord,
 In Jesu’s service join;
 Jesus gives the sacred word,
 The ordinance divine:
 Let us his command obey,
 And ask, and have, whate’er we want;
 Pray we, every moment pray,
 And never, never faint.

“ Place, no longer let us give
 To the old tempter’s will;
 Never more our duty leave,
 While Satan cries ‘ be still.’
 Stand we in the ancient way,
 And here with God ourselves acquaint;
 Pray we, every moment pray,
 And never, never faint.”

Encouraged by Mr. Wesley’s visit to Birstal, and still more so, by a second which took place a few weeks after, Nelson zealously proceeded; hewing stones in the day, and in the evening, frequently at a distance of several miles from his own home, engaging in the nobler work of preparing “ living stones” for the spiritual building of the church.

“ About this time,”—1742, writes he in his journal,

“William Shent, a barber, in Leeds, was converted ; and there began to be an uproar there, about his saying that he knew his sins forgiven. Some, however, believed his report, and had a desire to hear for themselves ; neither could he be content to eat his morsel alone, for his heart panted for the salvation of all his neighbours. The Christmas following, he desired me to go and preach at Leeds.” Such the rise of Methodism, in that important and populous town. How small the beginning ! How important the result !

The sphere of Nelson’s labours was now at Mr. Wesley’s desire, greatly enlarged ; till after having traversed well nigh the length and breadth of the land, he became, even in his native place, the victim of a capricious and unrelenting persecution : one result of which, was, that the first Methodist preacher who visited Bradford, was brought a prisoner, charged with the astounding crime of telling men, their sins might be forgiven ; whilst, the first Methodist service witnessed in the town, was a lively prayer-meeting held at the dungeon door !

During the period of the threatened invasion of this country, in 1743, by Charles, son of the old Pretender, Commissioners were appointed, with authority to impress as soldiers, all who were brought before them, whose lives were disorderly, or who had no apparent means of obtaining an honest livelihood. One of these Commissioners for the West-Riding, was the Rev. Mr. Coleby, Vicar of Birstal, who eagerly embraced the opportunity thus presented, to rid himself and the parish of his preaching parishioner.

At the instigation of the Vicar, who appears to have been John’s bitterest enemy, Nelson was apprehended

when preaching at Adwalton, in the house* of John Booth. This occurred on Friday, May 4th, 1744. The following day he was taken before the Commissioners at Halifax.

“They smiled at one another,” writes Nelson, “as soon as they saw me. They bade the door-keeper not to let any man come in; but Mr. Thomas Brooks had got in with me; and they said, ‘That is one of his converts.’ They then called Joseph Gibson,” the constable who apprehended him, “and asked, ‘How many men have you brought?’ He said, ‘One.’ ‘Well, and what have you against him?’ ‘Why, gentlemen,’ said he, ‘I have nothing to say against him, but he preaches to the people; and some of our townsmen don’t like so much preaching.’ They broke out in laughter; and one of them said, I was fit to go for a soldier, for then I might have preaching enough. I said to him, Sir, you ought not to swear! ‘Well,’ said they to me, ‘you have no licence to preach, and you shall go for a soldier.’ I answered, Sir, I have surely as much right to preach, as you have to swear. He said to the captain, ‘Captain, is he fit for you?’ ‘Yes,’ he answered. ‘Then take him away’.”

* The house itself is yet standing; and is here especially referred to, as being the spot from whence the rise of Methodism in Keighley may be traced. John Wilkinson, then resident in Keighley, having married a sister of Booth, was in the year 1742, on a visit at Adwalton. Hearing Nelson preach, his mind was partially enlightened; and deeply interested in the preacher, he invited him to Keighley. Nelson went; a society was quickly formed, and in process of time, the “little one became a thousand.” Until constituted in 1776, the head of a circuit, Keighley formed part of the Haworth “round.”

John Booth, son of the above, was for more than twenty years a Travelling Preacher. He is characterized in the conferential record as a “man of plain, useful talents, and much christian zeal.” His end though sudden, was yet peaceful and triumphant.

Unquestionable evidence was indeed adduced that John was not the character over whom they had any jurisdiction, but all to no purpose: the false statements of the Vicar secured his condemnation.

"At six," continues Nelson in his artless and touching narrative, "we set out for Bradford, and many of the inhabitants prayed for me, and wept to see me in the hands of unrighteous and cruel men. But I said, Fear not: God hath his way in the whirlwind, and he will plead my cause: only pray for me, that my faith fail not.

"When we were about half way between Halifax and Bradford, one of the soldiers said to me, 'Sir, I am sorry for you: for the captain is ordered by the Commissioners to put you in the dungeon; but I will speak to him, and if he will let me have the care of you, you shall lie with me, for the dungeon is as loathsome a place as ever I saw.' I thanked him for his offer: but when we got to Bradford, we were drawn up in the street where the cross stood,* and the captain went and fetched the people of the dungeon, and said, 'Take this man, and put him in the dungeon, and take this other along with you:' a poor, harmless man, all the clothes on whose back were not worth one shilling: neither did they lay any thing to his charge, when he was ordered for a soldier. But when we came to the dungeon door, the soldier who spoke to me by the way, went to the captain, and said, 'Sir, if you will give me charge over Mr. Nelson, my life for his, he shall be forthcoming in the morning.' But the captain threatened to break his head if he spoke about me any more.

"The captain came to us before I went down, and I asked him, Sir, what have I done, that I must go to

* See note B.

the dungeon ? If you are afraid of me that I should run away, set a guard over me in a room, and I will pay them. He answered, 'My order is, to put you in the dungeon.' So, I see my Lord's word is fulfilled, 'the servant is not above his Master :' for those who were accused of thieving, and great evils which they had done in the neighbourhood, must eat, and drink, and lie on feather beds ; but I only desired a little water, and it was refused me by the captain, although I had had nothing all the day, except a little tea in the morning. But my Master never sends his servants a warfare at their own charge : he gives strength according to their day. For when I came into the dungeon, that stunk worse than a hog-stye, by reason of the blood and filth which sink from the butchers who kill over it, my soul was so filled with the love of God, that it was a paradise to me.

" About ten, several of the people came to the dungeon door, and brought me some candles, and put me some meat and water in, through the hole of the door. When I had eaten and drunk, I gave God thanks ; and we sang hymns almost all night, they without, and I within.

" The same night, a man that lives in Bradford, came to the dungeon, and though he was an enemy to the Methodists, when he smelt the ill savour of the place, said, ' Humanity moves me.' He went away directly, and about eleven came again, and said, ' I will assure you, I am not in your way of thinking ; but for all that, I have been with your captain, and offered him ten pounds bail for you, and myself as prisoner, if he would let you lie in a bed ; but all in vain, for I can get nothing of him but bad words. If the justice were in town, I would have gone to him, and would soon have fetched you out. But since it is as it is, I pray

God plead your cause ! O my God ! let not him that would give a cup of cold water to thy servants, lose his reward ; but do thou bless him, and bless thy people !

“ The poor man that was with me might have starved, if my friends had not brought him meat ; for when our guard had locked us up, they went to their lodging, and took no more notice of us that night. Here, we had not so much as a stone to sit on.

“ When the man and I were laid down on a little foul straw, ‘ Pray you, Sir,’ said he, ‘ are all these your kinsfolk, that they love you so well ? I think they are the most loving people that ever I saw in my life.’ I answered, By this you may know that they are Christ’s disciples ; for this is the mark he himself has given, whereby all men might know his disciples from the unbelieving world.

“ At four in the morning, my wife and several more came to the dungeon, and spoke to me through the hole of the door, and I said, Jeremiah’s lot is fallen upon me. Then, it came to my remembrance, that when I was about thirteen or fourteen years old, I often thought, if God should make me like Jeremiah,—to stand, and speak his words to the people in the streets, as he did, I should not mind who cast dirt at me. And now, I am in some measure treated as he was, for persuading men to flee from ‘ the wrath to come.’

“ My wife said, ‘ Fear not : the cause is God’s, for which you are here, and he will plead it himself : therefore, be not concerned for me and the children ; he that feeds the young ravens, will be mindful of us : he will give you strength for your day ; and after we have suffered awhile, he will perfect that which is lacking in our souls, and then bring us, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.’ So they all said, that were with her at the door.

"About five in the morning, Sunday, May 6th, they took me out, and we were guarded to Leeds."

This persecuted man wore the habiliments of a common soldier, till the latter end of July, 1744: when, principally through the influence of the Countess of Huntingdon, his discharge was obtained: not, however, till in his soldier movements, he had in various parts, borne a bold and faithful testimony to the truth.

From 1750 to 1774, Mr. Nelson laboured as an itinerant preacher with acceptance and success; when on the 18th of July, 1774, he triumphantly exchanged mortality for life. His earthly remains, together with those of his worthy and faithful wife, wait for the resurrection of the just, in the burial-ground of the parish church, Birstal. A homely stone, bearing the following inscription, covers the grave:

JOHN NELSON,
DEPARTED THIS LIFE, JULY ^e 18,
1774, AGED 67 YEARS.
MARTHA, HIS WIFE, DEPARTED THIS
LIFE, SEP. ^e 11, 1774. AGED 69 YEARS.

To these, are added several lines of doggerel poetry, kindred, it is true, to much of what is found in country church-yards, yet sadly out of place,* when consti-

* That the reader may form his own judgment, we subjoin the verbatim production of the rustic muse:

"While we on earth had our abode,
We both agreed to serve the Lord;
And he was pleas'd, as you may see,
By death, not long us parted be;
Then he required the breath he gave,
And now we lie, both in one grave;
Until again, he us restore
A life to live, and die no more

tuting the only sepulchral remembrance of this excellent and useful man. "His record is indeed on high;" yet the Methodists of the West-Riding, and especially the society in Birstal, still owe a suitable monumental tribute to his memory.

Respecting his imprisonment in Bradford, the following particulars, not yet published, are deserving record here. The man who, moved by humanity, offered £10. bail, and himself as prisoner, that Nelson might be liberated for the night, was James Eastwood, an innkeeper, in Ivesgate. Amongst those who took part in the prayer-meeting held at the door of the dungeon, in addition to the wife of Nelson, were his brother Joseph, with Hannah Scholefield, and Martha Cowling, of Birstal; John Murgatroyd, of Gildersome; with Betty Firth, of Great-Horton, who, shortly after removing to Low-Moor, became, in all probability, the first Methodist there. Those, too, who were the principal actors in this disgraceful scene, were given to feel that, "verily, there is a God that judgeth in the earth:" a providential blight came over them. Gibson, the deputy constable, who seized this man of God, at Adwalton, after having repeatedly declared, that if his arm rotted from his shoulder, he himself would "press Nelson," realized but too soon, the consequences of his daring: paralysis succeeded inflammation, and the use of his arm never returned; whilst, at this day, the house of the persecutor is written in the dust. Whether the Reverend Commissioner and Vicar, who with such unrelenting bitterness, pursued and persecuted this worthy man, had his reward on earth, I know not. It is however, a fact well known, that his only child,—the last of the man,—must have sought an asylum in the parish workhouse, but for the united contributions of some Church friends and Methodists.

“The memory” of the mason-preacher, is even now “blessed;” whilst that of his persecutors is perishing away.

Such,—so far as any evidence can now be gained,—was the first introduction of Methodism into the town of Bradford. Whether any immediate impression in favour of “the truth,” was made upon the minds of the inhabitants, cannot at this period, be ascertained: ultimately, we know, good resulted. On several parts of the scene then witnessed, the mind even now dwells with pleasure: the passive heroism of the sufferer,—the fidelity and affection of his christian friends,—several of them coming from five to seven miles in the dead of the night, to sympathise with their imprisoned preacher,—the dungeon rendered vocal, perhaps for the first time, with the high praises of God,—are incidents which at once arrest, and interest the attention.

CHAPTER II.

FROM MR. WESLEY'S FIRST VISIT TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF BRADFORD, TO THE ERECTION OF THE FIRST "PREACHING HOUSE" AT BIRSTAL,—THE FOURTH ERECTED IN THE KINGDOM.

1744—51.

Mr. Wesley preaches at Little-Horton and at Bradford—Rise of Methodism in Low-Moor—Edward R. Leeds, Esq. noticed—Formation of the first Class in Bradford—Biographical notices of Betty Firth, Thomas Mitchell, John Murgatroyd and Nathaniel Dracup—Mr. Grimshaw's visits to Manningham and Bradford referred to—His covenant with God—Isaac Duckworth and John Clayton noticed—Early Tickets of the Society—Extract from Darney's Hymns—Chapel erected at Birstal—Mr. Whitfield preaches at Bradford—John, afterwards Dr. Fawcett, a Member of the Society.

BRADFORD, at an early period, was frequently visited by the venerated Wesley. In the summer of 1744, we find him preaching in the immediate neighbourhood; tradition says, at Little-Horton Hall, the residence of the Sharps; one of whom is stated to have been a fellow collegian of Mr. Wesley, at Oxford. "Thursday June 17," Mr. Wesley being at Birstal, writes, "I preached at 5, on Matt. x; about noon at Little-Horton, near Bradford; about three in the afternoon, at Sticker-Lane, and at Birstal in the evening." The places here named, are nearly equi-distant from Bradford; Sticker-Lane lying betwixt Dudley-Hill, and Bradford-Moor, whilst in the township of Little-Horton part of Bradford itself is now situate.

The following year, Mr. Wesley for the first time, preaches at Bradford :—“ Thursday, April 25, 1745, I preached,” says he, “ at Horton and Bradford. Here I could not but observe, how God has made void all their labour, ‘ who make void the law through faith.’ Out of their large Societies in these towns, how small a remnant is left! In Horton, scarce ten persons out of fourscore; in Bradford, not one soul.” The societies here referred to, were doubtless those of Mr. Ingham, to which allusion has been already made. The spread of Antinomian notions at this early period, will perhaps account for the fact, that Methodism, when established in this town and neighbourhood, progressed for some time but slowly. This un-eradicated leaven gave rise in after years, to many serious and painful disputes, which greatly retarded the work of God.

In 1746, Mr. Wesley preached to “ a quiet congregation at Bradford ;” and again in the spring of 1747; to which period, the formation of the first Methodist class in this immediate neighbourhood must be referred. “ Monday, April 27, 1747, I preached,” writes Mr. Wesley, “ at Birstal, at Wibsey-Moor, and at Bradford, and regulated the societies.”

The “ Wibsey-Moor” here named, is an extensive tract of land in the township of North-Bierley, much of which is yet uncultivated, and has for many years been known only as the Low-Moor ;—a place justly celebrated for the extensive Iron-Works established there, and now carried on under the firm of Messrs. Hird, Dawson, and Hardy. To this spot, Betty Firth, of Great-Horton, one of the little company who held the prayer-meeting at the dungeon door, had removed the following year, and was now the housekeeper of her uncle, Matthew Sugden. Though not a Methodist, Sugden so far

acceded to the wishes of his niece, as to allow John Nelson to preach every other week beneath his roof; and at her request, Mr. Wesley was invited to Wibsey (Low) Moor as above.

The house now occupied by Mr. Carter, of Low-Moor, and forming part of the Royds-Hall estate, is the one in which Sugden then lived. Edward R. Leeds, Esq. one of the Magistrates of the West-Riding, was at that period the owner of the property, and hearing of Nelson preaching in the house of one of his tenants, threatened Matthew with summary ejectment, should he venture to transgress a second time. Sugden in defending himself, threw all the blame upon his niece; but respectfully requested, that the landlord, ere carrying his threat into execution, would hear Nelson for himself. He did so; and although in no respect whatever a religious man, was so pleased with what he saw and heard, as to [befriend the mason-preacher] ever after.

Mr. Wesley, on this his first visit to Low-Moor, was accompanied by Nelson, his zealous coadjutor; and after preaching, either formed, or if one had previously existed,—of which no evidence is now forthcoming,—“regulated” the Society there. Ebenezer Pyrah,* who subsequently, for several years, held the office of Society-Steward, is supposed to have been the leader then appointed.

From Low-Moor, Mr. Wesley in the evening proceeded to Bradford, and uniting “several together in a class,” formed in all probability, the first Society in this ancient town. This interesting fact, we find confirmed in the auto-biography of Thomas Mitchell, one of the early Methodist Preachers. After referring to his dismissal from the army, at the termination of the rebellion in 1746, and his receiving much spiritual good

* See note C.

under the ministry of Messrs. Charles Wesley, Nelson, and others, he adds,—“ Soon after this, Mr. John Wesley came to Bradford, and preached from ‘ This one thing I do.’ He joined several of us together in a class, which met about a mile from the town. But all of them fell back, and left me alone; yet afterward some of them returned.”

Such is the earliest intimation of any Methodist Society in Bradford, or its vicinity; whilst the manner in which the statement itself is worded, authorizes perhaps, the supposition, that Mitchell was the first leader, as well as one of the first members of the Society then formed.

Notwithstanding its commencement was thus inauspicious,—only one of the little society remaining faithful, Methodism shortly after assumed a more important and permanent character.

In the Michaelmas of this year, 1747, John Murgatroyd, of Gildersome,—who though convinced of sin amongst “ Mr. Ingham’s people,” had, under the ministry of the Wesleys, been “ taught the way of the Lord more perfectly,”—removed to Little-Horton. As a matter of course, John Nelson was invited to his house. Under the plain and faithful ministrations of this useful man, several of the neighbours were led to enquire their way to Zion: a second class was formed, with Murgatroyd as its leader, and soon after a third at Great-Horton.

Amongst those who at this early period joined the ranks of Methodism, was Nathaniel Dracup, of Great-Horton; a steady moral young man, then in his nineteenth year, who subsequently became one of the most exemplary and useful members of the Wesleyan Society.

Of the four individuals mentioned above, viz., Betty Firth, Thomas Mitchell, John Murgatroyd, and Nathaniel Dracup, who thus appear to have been the first Methodists in this immediate neighbourhood, the following biographical notices will not perhaps be out of place. Indeed, one object which sketches such as the present should always embrace, is the rescuing from unmerited oblivion, many who in dark and adverse times, upheld and ornamented the truth, and to whom, as pioneers of Methodism, we in this day still remain indebted.

(1.) Betty Firth, who afterwards married Thomas Worsnop, one of the earliest leaders at Low-Moor, was at the period of Nelson's imprisonment, a member of the Presbyterian* Church, at Bradford. The doctrines there inculcated, were what some have designated "Baxterian Calvinism:" hence Betty, though a lover of Methodism, and one of its first members, was never, in sentiment, truly Wesleyan. Hers was the honour of introducing Methodism into Low-Moor; when, after continuing a member of Society for five and twenty years, she gratified her early predilections, by uniting herself to a neighbouring Calvinistic church, and in its faith and communion terminated her career on earth. Her husband, Thomas, was converted to God under the ministry of John Nelson. He was eminently a man of peace, and one who loved Zion: He died in the Lord, 1781, having been a member of Society upwards of thirty years. Her son, Jonas, bending beneath the weight of lengthened days, is still living, having been a Wesleyan Methodist nearly sixty years, and yet witnessing a good confession.

* The Presbyterian chapel, with the single exception of the Parish Church, is the oldest place of worship in the town of Bradford. Its ministry, though for many years evangelical, is now Socinian.

(2.) Thomas Mitchell, in all probability, the first Methodist in Bradford, was born at Bingley, Dec. 3d, 1726. He was apprenticed to a stone-mason, and afterwards, during the rebellion, enlisted in "the Yorkshire Blues." On his discharge from the army in 1746, he sought for "a people that feared God," and under the ministry of the Methodists, was quickly brought to a knowledge of "the truth as it is in Jesus." He now felt that enlargement of soul, so beautifully described by the poet of our Israel ;—

"The love of Christ doth me constrain,
To seek the wandering souls of men;
With cries, entreaties, tears, to save,
To snatch them from the gaping grave;"

and in the midst of much opposition, exhorted his fellow-sinners to flee from "the wrath to come." "All the day," says he, "I wrought diligently at my business, and in the evenings called sinners to repentance." So early as 1748, according to Mr. Myles, he entered upon the toilsome duties of the Methodist Itinerancy, in the faithful discharge of which, he laboured with great simplicity, acceptance, and success, till the year 1784 ; when, retiring from active service, he shortly after fell asleep in Jesus. The reflections, in which he indulges, towards the close of a long and useful life, pleasingly evince the right-heartedness of the man. "I now look back," writes he, "on the labour of three and thirty years, and I do not repent of it,—I am not grown weary of my Master, or the work I am engaged in. Though I am weak in body, and in the decline of life, my heart is still engaged in the cause of God. I am never more happy than when I feel the love of Christ in my heart, and am declaring his praise to others. There is nothing like the love of Christ in the heart, to make us holy and happy. It is love

alone that expels all sin out of the heart. Wherever love is wanting, there is hell ; and where love fills the heart, there is heaven. This has been a medicine to me ever since I set out: when I was low it was this that raised me up ; when sin and Satan beset me on every side, it was this that drove them away."

This worthy man was a tried and faithful soldier of the Cross; having passed through a series of harassing and brutal persecutions, yet n^t counting his "life dear unto him," so that he might "finish his course with joy."

The following statement, given in Mr. Mitchell's own words, whilst deeply interesting in itself, will fully justify the above assertion. It is indeed, but a specimen of what the fathers of our Israel had frequently to pass through.

"In the year 1751," observes he, "I was stationed in Lincolnshire. I found a serious people, and an open door; but, there were many adversaries. This was far the most trying year which I had ever known. But in every temptation, God made a way to escape, that I might be able to bear it.

"On Sunday, August 7th, I came to Wrangle, very early in the morning. I preached, as usual, at five. About six, two constables came, at the head of a large mob. They violently broke in upon the people, seized upon me, pulled me down, and took me to a public house, where they kept me till four in the afternoon. Then, one of the constables seemed to relent, and said, 'I will go to the minister, and enquire of him whether we may not now let the poor man go.' When he came back, he said, 'They were not to let him go yet.' So he took me out to the mob, who presently hurried me away, and threw me into a pool of standing water.

It took me up to the neck. Several times I strove to get out, but they pitched me in again. They told me I must go through it seven times. I did so, and then they let me come out. When I had got upon dry ground, a man stood ready with a pot full of white paint. He painted me all over from head to foot; and then they carried me into a public house again. Here I was kept, till they had put five more of our friends into the water. Then they came and took me out again, and carried me to a great pond, which was railed in on every side, being ten or twelve feet deep. Here, four men took me by my legs and arms, and swung me backwards and forwards. For a moment, I felt the flesh shrink; but it was quickly gone. I gave myself up to the Lord, and was content his will should be done. They swung me two or three times, and then threw me as far as they could into the water. The fall and the water soon took away my senses, so that I felt nothing more. But some of them were not willing to have me drowned. So they watched till I came above water, and then catching hold of my clothes with a long pole, made shift to drag me out.

“ I lay senseless for some time. When I came to myself, I saw only two men standing by me. One of them helped me up, and desired me to go with him. He brought me to a little house, where they quickly put me to bed. But I had not lain long, before the mob came again, pulled me out of bed, carried me into the street, and swore they would take away one of my limbs, if I would not promise to come there no more. I told them, I can promise no such thing. But the man that had hold of me promised for me, and took me back into the house, and put me to bed again.

“ Some of the mob then went to the minister again, to know what they must do with me. He told them,— ‘ You must take him out of the parish.’ So they came

and took me out of bed a second time. But I had no clothes to put on, my own being wet, and also covered with paint. But they put an old coat about me, took me about a mile, and set me upon a little hill. They then shouted three times—‘God save the king, and the devil take the preacher !’

“Here they left me pennyless and friendless : for none durst come near me. And my strength was nearly gone, so that I had much ado to walk, or even to stand. But from the beginning to the end, my mind was in perfect peace. I found no anger or resentment, but could heartily pray for my persecutors. But I knew not what to do, or where to go. Indeed, one of our friends lived three or four miles off. But I was so weak and ill, that it did not seem possible for me to get so far. However, I trusted in God, and set out ; and at length, I got to the house. The family did every thing for me that was in their power : they got me clothes, and whatever else was needful. I rested four days with them, in which time my strength was tolerably restored.”

Amid scenes of this kind, nothing but the influence of a spirit,

“Such as in the martyrs glow’d,”

could have induced these holy men to prosecute the self-denying, the then hazardous attempt, of calling sinners to repentance. They truly laboured, and we have “entered into their labours.”

(3.) John Murgatroyd, one of the earliest companions of *our* celebrated Nelson, and for upwards of sixty years a faithful member of the Methodist Society, was born at Gildersome, May 12, 1723. When one and twenty years of age, he commenced his religious career, as a member of the second class formed in Yorkshire,

and soon after obtained a knowledge of salvation by the remission of his sins.

On the 14th of September, 1747, he entered into the marriage state with Deborah North, a God-fearing woman, of Little-Horton. John Nelson and his wife were present at the wedding, and as might be anticipated, the day of union was eminently a day of prayer and praise. Settling at Little-Horton, their house was at once opened for the preaching of the word ; and soon, as in primitive times, a “ church” was formed in their habitation. Here, when few in the neighbourhood deemed it an honor to entertain such men, the revered Wesley, and his early helpers, found a comfortable home.

Murgatroyd is spoken of, as “ one of the most cheerful men that ever lived ;” yet he was never a trifler. Sparing in his diet, and living by rule, he enjoyed a state of almost uninterrupted health, for nearly four-score years. In dress, he was plain ; wearing always a blue coat and waistcoat, and refusing to alter; not putting on mourning, even for his nearest relations. He was averse to every thing that had even the appearance of parade, or ostentation : hence, when undertaking a journey, he made as little preparation as circumstances would admit. On one occasion, having business in London, which required his presence there, lest his wife, who was a woman of admirable order and neatness, should make too “ much ado,” he left her in ignorance, as to the full extent of his intended journey; and in less than a fortnight, returned in good health to his wondering family ; having walked all the way thither and back, a distance of at least four hundred and twenty miles !

As the head of a numerous family, it was his constant endeavour to go in and out before them in the fear of God. Twice every day, and sometimes oftener, were

all his household called together, to hear some portion of God's holy word, and to unite in prayer and praise before him. He was not a man of shining talent, but rather sought to lead a peaceable and quiet life, "in all godliness."

He delighted, especially in the decline of life, to call to remembrance the "days of old." Often would he take John Nelson's journal into his hand, and say to his grand-children, "I *know* a great part of this to be true; it is all true;" and referring to certain particulars there named, observe, "I was present on such and such an occasion."*

In 1790, he removed to Wansford, in the Bridlington circuit; where, to the close of life, his zeal for God, and his endeavours to do good, were unabated. The day before his death, he walked several miles to hear preaching, and appeared unusually animated: in the evening he performed as customary, the duties of the domestic altar, and on retiring to rest fell asleep to wake with God.

(4.) Nathaniel Dracup, whose brother John was for many years minister of the Sowerby-Steep-Lane Baptist chapel, was born near Idle, in the year 1729. Early in life he removed to Great-Horton, and in all likelihood, was the first Methodist in that populous township.

Of him, it may be truly said, that he "feared the Lord from his youth." As "touching the law," he was in the estimation of those around him, "blameless;" and on this his upright, irreproachable demeanour, he pharisaically rested for acceptance with God. Under the ministry of the Methodists however, his

* For several particulars mentioned in this sketch, I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. Joseph Hill, a respectable local preacher in Bramley, and grandson of the above.

mind was scripturally enlightened. The law, brought home to his conscience, blasted at once all his self-righteous and deceptive hopes : the fair exterior of piety in which he had gloried was held as valueless, and renouncing his own righteousness, he happily realized “ the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

Having “ tasted of the heavenly gift,” he felt a holy yearning for the souls of others, and was thus led according to the ability given him of God, to make known to his perishing fellow-men the glad-tidings of salvation. He was one of the first local preachers in this part of the West-Riding, and for upwards of forty years laboured in that important vocation with untiring diligence and zeal ; frequently preaching on the Sabbath three or four times, and walking during the day from twenty to thirty miles. His style as a preacher was argumentative ; and though far from being a Boanerges in the pulpit, his ministrations were of a highly useful and acceptable character. To this indeed, the uniform integrity which characterized the man greatly contributed. He was one of the few who have “ a good report of all men, and of the truth itself;” so much so, that the passage perplexed him, “ woe unto you when all men speak well of you !”

He was well versed in the calvinistic controversy ; delighting both in his public and private capacity, to dwell upon, and to substantiate the important truth,—

“ A world he suffered to redeem,
For all he hath th’ atonement made :
For those that will not come to him,
The ransom of his life was paid.”

He was a zealous reprobate of sin ; yet such was the affection and seriousness with which he discharged this important duty, that the tongue of derision was at once silenced ; whilst in numberless instances, the sons of wickedness fled at his approach.

This good man was the leader of the first class formed in Great-Horton ; and for many years previous to the erection of the first school and preaching-room there, the usual services of Methodism were held beneath his roof.

The illness, which terminated in his removal to a happier world, was protracted and painful ; but his whole deportment testified that he had learned to suffer, as well as to do the will of God. In conversation with those who visited him, the doctrines of the cross were his constant theme : in the administration of godly counsel, of consolation, or reproof, he was, even to his latest hour, “ about his Father’s business.”

His death was eminently peaceful, and suited to his life. Whilst Roger Milnes, a brother leader, was engaged in prayer, and in allusion to the speedy liberation of the aged saint, adopting the petition of the Apocalypse, —“ Even so come, Lord Jesus ! come quickly !” Dracup, with peculiar fervour, uttered the response, “ Amen !” and with the “ so be it” of the church upon his lips, breathed his soul at once to God. He died May 30th, 1798, *Ætatis*, 69, having been a member of the methodist society upwards of fifty years. “ Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.”

It is to be regretted, that in the records of our Israel, no mention whatever is made of this truly excellent man. Beyond the grateful recollections of those who knew and prized his worth, his only earthly remembrancer, up to the present time, has been a somewhat rude, yet touching Elegy,* wrote by him on the death of the celebrated Grimshaw, to whom Nathaniel was devotedly attached.

August 23d, 1748, Mr. Wesley again visited Brad-

* For an extract from this, see Note D.

ford. "About one," writes he, "I preached at Baildon, and in the evening at Bradford; where none behaved indecently, but the Curate of the Parish."

At this period, and indeed till Bradford was constituted the head of a circuit, the societies in the immediate neighbourhood were connected with Birstal,—"the mother church." There, alternately with Haworth,—distant at least ten miles,—the early Methodists in Bradford and Horton, were accustomed to resort for worship. "The Word of the Lord" was in those days "precious," and was highly prized. We in this day, are perhaps in danger from the contrary extreme.

In 1749, the stream of Methodism flowing from Haworth, reached "the Oaks," and Manningham; the former being a farm-house in the township of Allerton, distant from Bradford about two miles. John Pickard, who then occupied the farm, having received "the truth in the love thereof," was induced to open his house for the ministry of the Word. Soon after, a class was formed, of which Pickard was appointed leader. Amongst its earliest members were James and Isaac Duckworth, together with their sister Sarah, and one Mary Haigh: to these, sometime after, were added John and Mary Clayton, of Daisy-Hill,—parents of the Rev. Isaac Clayton, who for nearly thirty years, laboured acceptably as an itinerant Preacher. About the same time also, a class was formed at Manningham, in the house of Hannah Stead.

From the diary of the venerated Grimshaw, now in the possession of the Rev. James Everett, it appears that soon after this, preaching was *regularly* established at Manningham, under his direction. Bradford

also, was favoured with frequent visits from this great and good man.* Not being allowed the use of the Church, he generally preached in the open air; either at the foot of the Church Bank, or in the “open space near the water side.”

Isaac Duckworth,—one of the first members of “the Oaks” class, continued for upwards of forty years a faithful and consistent member of the methodist society. In 1760, he was taken into the service of the Wesleys, who highly esteemed him as a man of strict and unobtrusive piety. In their employ, he spent several years at the “New Room,” Bristol, and frequently attended Mr. Charles Wesley in his journeyings to and fro. He was much respected by the societies amongst whom his lot was cast; many of whom are said to have entertained a “singular regard” for him. Returning to his native place, he became the leader of a flourishing class,—had preaching in his house at Daisy-Hill, and eventually died in triumph, Sept. 28th, 1791. Some of his last words were,—“The Lord is my treasure and my life.”—“Precious Jesus! let me sink into thine arms.”

* In an old Bible, formerly used in the reading-desk, and now kept in the vestry of the Parish church, is the following covenant, in Mr. Grimshaw’s hand-writing, which this devoted man, about this period, entered into with God;—

“Often have I, and once more, do I totally devote, most solemnly surrender, by this sacred Book of God, and for ever give up to God, in Christ, my Head and Lord, my Body, Soul, and Spirit, and all I am, and have, and may be, in the fullest sense of St. Paul’s exhortation, Romans xii. 1, 2. And I nothing doubt, but, that as I have hitherto found by many years’ experience in Christ, that his grace is sufficient for me; so I always shall be enabled to do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth me.

So help me, O triune God!

WILLIAM GRIMSHAW,

August 4, 1754.

Minister of Haworth.”

Few perhaps have been religiously awakened under circumstances similar to those, in which the Clayton mentioned above, was led to ask, "What must I do to be saved?" Hearing that Mr. Whitfield, then in the zenith of his popularity and usefulness, was to preach at Haworth, he was led from motives of curiosity to attend. The church being far too small to accommodate the immense numbers who were gathered together, the minister stood on a tombstone in the church-yard, and with his wonted eloquence and energy, proclaimed the Word of Life. John, to whom the scene was altogether novel, in his anxiety to see as well as hear, had scaled the church itself, and perched upon the roof, attentively surveyed the whole. Here, however, the truth preached,—as a sure winged arrow, pierced his heart. Feelings, to which he had previously been an entire stranger, almost overwhelmed him; and gladly would he have slunk into any corner,—there, to weep alone, but this, his lofty situation permitted not. He now became a willing captive to the truth; and united to the church,—in which, for many years, he held the office of leader,—continued to his dying day a consistent and devoted member. He entered into rest, May 25th, 1785, $\text{\textcircumflex} \text{Et. 58}$. Mary, his wife, having as a member of Society, held the "peaceful tenor of her way," for nearly sixty years, died in a "good old age," honoured and beloved by all who knew her.

Several of the early tickets of these good people are carefully preserved by their descendants; and if by these we are authorized to decide as to the taste of the early Methodists, our forefathers were doubtless fonder of embellishment than are we. One, for instance, presents a neat engraving of father Time, with his scythe and hour-glass, having underneath, the motto, "Now is the accepted time." Another represents a

female in the posture of devotion, having as its motto, “Pray always, and faint not.” Devices of a similar kind characterized for some time the tickets of the society.

Some information as to the state and progress of Methodism at this period, in Bradford and its vicinity, may be gleaned from a singular “Collection of Hymns,” published “by William Darney,” in the year 1751.

Darney was one of the early methodist preachers, having entered the Itinerancy in 1742. He was instrumental in raising up several societies in Todmorden and its neighbourhood, which for several years bore his name. Though irregular in his ministerial movements, and leaning somewhat to calvinism, he was yet, in his way, extensively useful. He is represented as a man “possessing few personal attractions, of a broad scottish dialect, and when dwelling on the terrors of the Lord, terrible to behold; but a man of deep piety, strong sense, and burning zeal.” At the close of his sermons, he frequently gave out verses of his own composing, which, in many instances, the excitement of the moment suggested. He at length, gratified his poetic predilections, by sending from the press the publication now referred to; a work, which is said to have given rise to the regulation of one of the early Conferences, that, “no preacher should print anything without Mr. Wesley’s approbation.”

The following verses are from a Hymn, entitled,— “The Progress of the Gospel in divers places in Great Britain;” respecting which, the author gravely suggests in the preface, that, “it is not made so proper for singing, as for reading!” To a correct ear, the doggerel character of the whole must indeed sound harshly; yet the information given as to the progress

of Methodism at that early period, yields perhaps an ample atonement.

“ In Leedes, and many towns around,
The work goes sweetly on;
There’s many hear the Gospel sound,
And to the Saviour turn.

“ In Birstal, and the places near,
They’ve long time heard the sound
Of thy sweet gospel, Saviour, dear!
Let much fruit there be found.

“ O purge thou them from Bigotry !
Likewise from spiritual Pride :
And make them simple : set them free,
In Jesus to abide.

“ On Wakefield cast a pitying eye,
For it hath long withstood,
And did thy messengers defy,
O turn thou them, O God !

“ On Bradford likewise, look thou down,
Where Satan keeps his seat;
Come by thy power; Lord! him dethrone;
For thou art very great !

“ In Windall, and in Baildon town,
Thy children simple be;
In Yeadon, and in Menston-Green,
Some truly mourn for thee.

“ In Ecclesall they’re stiff and proud ;
And few that dwell therein,
Do shew they’ve any fear of God,
Or hatred unto sin.

“ In Keighley, by thine own right hand,
A church is planted there ;
O help them, Saviour ! all to stand,
Thy goodness to declare.

“ Haworth ’s a place that God doth own,
With many a sweet smile ;
With power the gospel ’s preach’d therein,
Which many a one doth feel.

“ But while the strangers do receive
 The blessing from above,
 There’s many near the church that starve,
 For want of Jesu’s love.

“ At Bradford dale, and Thornton town,
 And places all around ;
 And at Ling-bob, sometimes at noon,
 The gospel trump we sound.

“ In Halifax, and Skircoat-Green,
 Some precious souls there be ;
 Which are now sav’d by faith alone,
 And bring forth fruit to thee.”

Darney’s representation of Bradford, as a place where “ Satan kept his seat,” was doubtless, in relation to the spread of Methodism, literally true. Up to this period, no footing appears to have been effected in the town itself. Those, whom Mr. Wesley in 1747, “ joined together in a class,” *in Bradford*, met about a mile *from* the town : Murgatroyd’s residence in Little-Horton, was nearly the same distance ; and although classes were formed in almost every adjoining direction, the town, it seems, withstood the siege.

In 1751, the first methodist chapel, or “ preaching-house,” in this vicinity, was erected at Birstal. The building being somewhat metropolitan in its character, “ all the Methodists of the neighbouring societies” contributed towards its erection ; whilst, in accordance with this design, the Trustees were selected, not only from the society, in Birstal, but Gomersal, Great-Horton,* Gildersome, and other adjacent places. Respecting the settlement of the chapel, Mr. Wesley in “ the case of Birstal House,” inserted in the thirteenth volume of his Works, observes, “ John Nelson, knowing

* John Dawtry was the Trustee selected from the society at Horton, of whom however, nothing further can now be ascertained.

no better, suffered a deed to be drawn in the Presbyterian form ; giving twelve or thirteen persons power, not only of placing, but even of displacing the Preachers at their pleasure. Had Mr. Whitfield or I known this, we should have insisted on its either being cancelled, like that at Bristol, or so altered, as to insure the application of the house to the purpose for which it was built, without giving so dangerous a power to any 'Trustees whatever.' The idea of interweaving the practices of Independency with our usages as a Connexion, must to a reflecting mind, appear altogether visionary ; yet, in the attempt to accomplish this, much zeal and resolution were in the early days of Methodism uselessly expended.

In 1755, in addition to a visit from Mr. Wesley in the spring of the year, on which he notices a salutary change " wrought in the hearts of the people, since John Nelson was in the dungeon here," Bradford was also favoured with the ministrations of the Rev. George Whitfield, who preached to an immense concourse of people, " in an open part of the town near the water side."

One of Mr. Whitfield's hearers on this occasion, was John, afterwards, Dr. Fawcett, then an apprentice in Bradford, but subsequently a distinguished minister among the Baptists, and author of the celebrated "Essay on Anger." Under the sermon in the morning, from John iii. 14, young Fawcett was " pricked to the heart." " I lay," writes he, " under the scaffold, and it appeared as if all his words were addressed to me, and as if he had known my most secret thoughts from ten years of age." He immediately attended the meetings of the society, and after associating with the Methodists for two or three years, spent his subsequent career, honourably and usefully as a calvinistic Baptist.

CHAPTER III.

FROM THE OCCUPANCY OF THE FIRST PREACHING-ROOM IN
BRADFORD, IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THE COCK-PIT,
TO THE ERECTION OF THE OCTAGON CHAPEL AND
PREACHER'S HOUSE IN HORTON-LANE.

1756—67.

Preaching-room near the Cock-pit—Formation of the Baptist church in Bradford—Mr. Wesley visits Bradford—Mr. William Pollard noticed—Dissensions in the society—Mr. Venn meets Mr. Wesley at Bradford—Mr. Crabtree noticed—Public disputation in Burnett-Fields—Preaching removed to Mr. Garnett's Barn—The first Lovefeast in Yorkshire—Names of Leaders in 1763—William Hainsworth and George Render noticed—Erection of the Octagon chapel—Mr. Richard Fawcett noticed—Yearly collection and Chapel Fund referred to—Methodism in its relation to the Established Church—Erection of the first Preachers' House in Bradford.

No record is at this day found of any house or room being used by the Methodists as a place of worship in Bradford, till the year 1756, when the second floor of a large building near the Cock-pit, having been vacated by the Baptists,* was rented by the Society, and thus became the first methodist Preaching-room in the town of Bradford.—To this, doubtless, Mr. Wesley refers, when in 1757, he observes in his Journal ;—

* In 1753, the first Baptist church was formed in Bradford : Mr. Crabtree,—one of the early seals of Mr. Grimshaw's ministry, being ordained Pastor. Their meetings were for some time held in the room above referred to, till in 1755, they removed to a newly-erected “Meeting-House” in Westgate.

“Thursday, May 12. The latter end of the week I spent in Bradford. Sunday, 15, at five, the house contained the congregation, but at eight, they covered the plain adjoining to it. The sun was hot till the clouds interposed: it was a solemn and comfortable season. As soon as the service of the church was ended, I began at the end of the house again, and exhorted a willing multitude to ‘follow after charity.’ A shower of rain and hail fell as I drew to a conclusion, but it did not disturb the congregation.”

The “house” here named is yet standing; though much altered as to its external appearance and the scenery by which it is surrounded. From the east end of the building, where Mr. Wesley stood, when addressing the multitude on “the plain,” to the Sun inn, was then an open space, interrupted only by the beck, and the old two-storied prison, which stood on the scite of what are now denominated the “Sun-bridge Buildings;” whilst, to the right, with the exception of three houses, forming the west side of Tyrrel-street, and one or two small cottages intervening, was a yet further extension of “the plain.” Where the “New inn” now stands, was then a low, old-fashioned house, in the occupancy of the Aked family; to this, an old farm-house adjoined, and in the immediate vicinity, several smaller houses, now in ruins. Such, with fields extending where the Thornton-road now runs, together with the deserted cock-pit and dog-kennell, in juxtaposition, was the neighbourhood in which this early “preaching-house” was situate. The room itself was large, measuring in length somewhat more than one and twenty yards, and in width nearly eight; whilst underneath, was the residence of Mr. William Pollard, grandfather of the present proprietor of the Scar-Hall estate, who, with his family, if not

more intimately associated, was yet a stated hearer of the Wesleyan Methodists.

The subsequent fate of this once consecrated spot almost irresistibly calls forth a feeling of regret. No superstitious attachment can justly be ascribed to us, when giving utterance to the wish, that the spot where our fathers worshipped,—where infant Methodism was nurtured,—where such honoured men as Wesley, Grimshaw, and Whitfield, held forth the word of life,—where, too, the Baptist church of Bradford, now numerous and respectable, was formed, should still have been appropriated to uses, indirectly at least, connected with what is sacred. Far otherwise however has been its lot. The history of its appropriation presents a catalogue at once diversified and ludicrous. Where once the truth was faithfully proclaimed, the reveries of Joanna Southcot, and the almost equally absurd vagaries of Baron Swedenborg have been held forth. The humble yet valued sanctuary has in succession passed through the several transmigrations of Barracks,—Paint-shop,—School-room,—Vagrants' refuge,—Warehouse,—Printing office, and Joiner's-shop; and is now used, partly as a tenement, and partly as a Model-room! Its more hallowed appropriation, however, by the Fathers of our Israel, contrasted with the commanding position Methodism has since their day assumed, must ever be a subject of interesting and grateful remembrance.

The occupancy of the room here referred to, together with the somewhat unusual attentions of the venerated Wesley on his late visit, seems to indicate that Methodism had at length not only taken root in Bradford, but was now beginning to send forth its branches. Whether Mr. Wesley's protracted visit was occasioned

by prospects of good then opening, or by circumstances which rendered necessary a more careful oversight of the little flock, does not appear. The latter is however most probable. Doctrinal differences were at that early period rife: the “five points,” as balls of contention, were freely, and sometimes roughly tossed to and fro; and the doom of the lost,—if the bard of Paradise sing truly,—

“Others apart, sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
Of Providence, foreknowledge, will and fate:
Fixed fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute;
And found no end in wand’ring mazes lost;”

Book II. L. 557, &c.

was unhappily anticipated. To this, the occasional ministrations of the celebrated Whitfield, then calvinistic in his views, doubtless contributed. Many who had been awakened under his eloquent and forcible exhibition of the doctrines of the cross, had also imbibed his restricted views of the “doctrines of grace,” so called; and, dissatisfied with the scripturally-arminian pasture which Methodism provided, were induced to seek elsewhere, a ministry more suited to their taste. Several of the society, with Mr. afterwards Dr. Fawcett, attended for a season the services of the Independents in Leeds; and soon, the design was formed to establish an interest of a similar kind in Bradford.* A young man from Wakefield, named Hales,—“a good speaker and of liberal education,”—had preached among the seceding party, and so far gained their approbation, that a negotiation was set on foot to secure his services as their stated minister. His views however changed, and their scheme was for a season thwarted. “Such a damp,” it is said, “was thrown over their spirits, that

* See life of Dr. Fawcett, by his son

the plan of erecting a place of worship was relinquished, and not resumed during the lifetime of many, who then took so active a part."

To this circumstance, the following entry in Mr. Wesley's journal has immediate reference: "1759, Tuesday, July 24. About seven in the evening, I preached at Bradford, at the door of the house, as it could not contain one-half of the congregation. Wednesday, 25, I talked with most of those whom Edward Hales had torn from their brethren. Just as he was coming to widen the breach, it pleased God to take him to himself. The wanderers are now willing to return, and I received them again, I trust for ever."

Scenes of contention are, however, again placed on record, when in 1761, Mr. Wesley writes,— "Wednesday,* July 15, I rode over to Bradford in the afternoon,

* Mr. Venn, the excellent and pious vicar of Huddersfield, spent the evening of this day with Mr. Wesley at Bradford. The object of his visit was to secure the withdrawal of the preachers from Huddersfield, on the ground, that the gospel being preached in the church, the auxiliary services of Methodism were no longer needed. Mr. Wesley's views are given in a letter to Mr. Blackwall, wrote the following day:—

"I am a little embarrassed," observes he, "on his (Mr. Venn's) account, and hardly know how to act. Several years before he came to Huddersfield, some of our preachers went thither, carrying their lives in their hands, and with great difficulty established a little earnest Society. These eagerly desire them to preach there still; not in opposition to Mr. Venn, (whom they love, esteem, and constantly attend,) but to supply what they do not find in his preaching. It is a tender point. Where there is a gospel ministry *already*, we do not desire to preach; but whether we can leave off preaching because such an one comes *after*, is another question; especially when those who were awakened and convinced by us, beg and require the continuance of our assistance. I love peace, and follow it; but whether I am at liberty to purchase it at such price, I cannot tell."

Sometime after, Mr. Wesley's judgment so far yielded to his love of peace, that for one or two years the preachers were withdrawn;

where I found an Anabaptist teacher had perplexed and unsettled the minds of several, but they are now less ignorant of Satan's devices." Conjecture at once fixes upon the late Rev. William Crabtree as the teacher here alluded to, whose own historian represents it as "no matter of surprise," that "his zeal for the doctrines of the gospel should carry him beyond the limits which rigid prudence might prescribe." Crabtree was a calvinist of the old school, and though determinately opposed to much of the theology of Methodism, was yet manly and honest in the avowal of his sentiments. So far, indeed, did his anti-arminian zeal transport him, that a public discussion, in which he appeared as the leader of the calvinistic party, was about this time held in Burnet-Fields. A stage was erected, on which, as the arena, the "five points" were strenuously debated. Crabtree and his friends claimed the victory, yet the general tendency of the discussion served but to confirm the contending parties in their respective views.

During the interim of Mr. Wesley's visits in 1759 and 1761, the room near the cock-pit being deemed no longer safe, was given up. The floor, in fact, gave way whilst the congregation were assembled for worship; yet, although much alarm was excited, providentially, no accident occurred. Mr. James Garnett, piece-maker, then residing at the Paper-Hall, (an ancient building in High-street,) being present, kindly offered the use of his "laith" or barn, until better ac-

but, no beneficial end being answered, things quickly reverted to their former channel.

If such however, were Mr. Wesley's views, when Methodism was simply *a society in the Church*,—auxiliary to it,—we may easily conceive what would have been his procedure, now, that by a series of events equally providential, Methodism is to all intents and purposes, a church in and of itself; the claims of high churchmanship would have been at once, and indignantly resisted.

commodation could be secured. The offer was at once, and thankfully accepted ; and there, for a season, the services of Methodism were regularly held.

Mr. Garnett, to whom Methodism was thus indebted for its second sanctuary in Bradford, was for several years a member of the Society : in 1781, he and his wife, Eleanor, appear as members of the class met by Thomas Haigh. Eventually, however, their first religious associates were renounced : in conjunction with Messrs. Smith, Balme, Hodgson, and others, they assisted in erecting the platform of an Independent church ; meeting for a while in an upper room in the brewhouse yard, and then removing to a newly-erected chapel in Little-Horton lane.

Sunday, July 19, 1761. The first lovefeast witnessed in the West-Riding, was held by Mr. Wesley, at Birstal. " Many were surprised," observes he, " when I told them the very design of a lovefeast is a free and familiar conversation, in which every man, yea and woman, has liberty to speak whatever may be to the glory of God. Several then did speak, and not in vain. The flame ran from heart to heart ; especially while one was declaring with all simplicity, the manner wherein God, during the morning sermon, (on those words, ' I will, be thou clean,') had set her soul at full liberty. Two men also spoke to the same effect ; and two others, who had found peace with God. We then joyfully poured out our souls before God, and praised him for his marvellous works." At the above meeting, Dracup, Murgatroyd, and others, from the neighbourhood of Bradford, were present, who, almost to their dying day, were accustomed to speak of it as a peculiarly gracious season.

From 1763, our steps are guided by more certain

data. An old society-book, commencing July the 4th of this year, is in excellent preservation, and furnishes much valuable matter. The following statement of the society's income for the September quarter is interesting, not only as presenting the number of classes, and the names of the Leaders at that early period, but also as shewing what places were regarded as the Bradford branch of the Birstal circuit.

| | £. s. d. |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Bradford,.... Richard Stocks..... | 1 6 6 |
|* George Render | 0 11 7 |
|* Wm. Hainsworth | 0 6 0 |
|John Midgley..... | 0 8 8 |
| Great-Horton, Nathaniel Dracup..... | 0 5 0 |
|Lower Class | 0 3 8 |
| Low-Moor.... Thomas Worsnop..... | 0 7 2 |
| Wibsey..... Jeremiah Bastow | 0 3 0 |
| Shipley..... Thomas Fairbank..... | 0 6 5 |
| Idle..... George Whitaker | 0 8 4 |
| Eccleshill.... Anthony Read | 0 2 10 |
| Pudsey | 0 10 11 |
| Dudley-Hill. John Deacon | 1 0 5 |
| Little-Horton John Murgatroyd | 0 4 0 |
| Bowling.... John Garforth..... | 0 1 6 |
| Received from Samuel Broadley | 0 5 0 |
| Quarterly Collection | 1 6 8 |
| | <hr/> |
| | £7 17 8 |

Nathaniel Dracup and Ebenezer Pyrah were at this period the society stewards. The items of expenditure

* Both these were truly excellent and exemplary men ; having faithfully sustained for upwards of forty years the office of Class-Leader,—to which they were appointed by the Founder of Methodism himself. The former died in 1804,—the latter in 1789, testifying with their latest breath the truth and efficacy of the religion they had long professed.

William, son of the Hainsworth above, entered the Itinerancy in 1790, and closed a useful life in 1824 : His grandson William, now honourably sustains the name and office of his ancestor as a Leader in the Bradford East circuit.

for some years, are principally “charges” presented by the several places for the entertainment of the preachers and their horses during their respective visits, together with the surplus cash entered as “paid to Birstal.”

June 30, 1764, Mr. Wesley preached again in Bradford. “This was,” says he, “a place of contention for many years; but since the contentious have quitted us, all is peace. Sunday, July 1, I preached at seven, to a more numerous congregation, than I believe ever assembled there before, and all were serious as death.” At one, the same day, Mr. Wesley preached at Birstal, and in the evening at Leeds.

From an item which appears in the society’s accounts for the following year, it would seem that the room near the cock-pit had again been occupied as a place for preaching; the rent of the old meeting-house being entered in October as £3. 13s. 6d. Twelve shillings and eightpence are also in July, placed under the head of “Lawyer Stanhope and expences;” an entry this, perhaps, referring to the transfer of land for the erection of a chapel which was then seriously contemplated.

In the Minutes of Conference for 1765,—after a chasm in their publication of several years,—the “stations of the preachers,” are for the first time given. The appointment for Birstal,—then embracing, what are now the Halifax, Huddersfield, Bradford-West and East, Sowerby Bridge, Dewsbury, Holmfirth, Cleckheaton, Yeadon, Woodhouse-grove and Shipley circuits,—is John Murlin, Parson Greenwood, and John Pawson. The members of Society returned at the close of the year, were 1376.*

* The number of Members, in what was then the Birstal circuit as stated in “the Minutes” for 1840, is 14,279!

In the autumn of this year, 1765, land was purchased for the erection of a chapel, in Great-Horton Lane. The deed which bears date, Dec. 21, 1765, describes the purchase as “an assignment on lease of 999 years, subject to an annual rent of £3. 12s. 0d. of all that close, or parcel of arable, meadow, or pasture ground, called, or commonly known by the name of the Hillyclose, formerly in the possession, or occupancy of Edward Jobson, and late of Thomas Aked, deceased, containing by estimation, two days’ work, be the same more or less, situate, lying, and being in Horton, in the parish of Bradford.” The property, for the purchase of which £20 were paid, was vested in the following persons as trustees ;—

| | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Richard Stocks..... | Grocer and Draper.. | Bradford. |
| John Hodgson..... | Stuff Maker..... | Horton. |
| Henry Atkinson..... | Stuff Maker..... | Mannigham. |
| Nathaniel Dracup... | Shuttle Maker..... | Horton. |
| Ebenezer Pyrah..... | Stuff Maker..... | Wibsey. |
| John Butler..... | Stuff Maker..... | Bradford. |
| John Murgatroyd... | Stuff Maker..... | Horton. |

The chapel,* which in the deed is described as a “large commodious house,”† was regularly settled, pursuant to the usage of the Connexion in that day ; and thus were the unpleasantnesses subsequently witnessed at Birstal, Dewsbury, Eccleshill, and elsewhere happily avoided.

At the time of executing the deed, the chapel was in part erected, but was not opened till the summer following ; when Mr. Wesley visiting Bradford thus observes,

* See a vignette engraving of the chapel and preachers’ houses, as they stood in 1801, given in the title page. The small cottage nearest to the chapel, was then occupied by the chapel-keeper.

† “ Warn our people,” said Mr. Wesley in one of the early Conferences, “against calling our houses, meeting houses ; call them plain preaching houses.”

“ 1776, Sunday, July 27, at Bradford there was so huge a multitude, and the rain so damped my voice, that many in the skirts of the congregation could not hear distinctly. They have just built a preaching house, 54 feet square, the largest Octagon we have in England; and it is the first of the kind where the roof is built with common sense, rising only a third of its breadth; yet it is as firm as any in England; nor does it at all hurt the walls. Why then does any roof rise higher? Only through want of skill, or want of honesty in the builder.”

The principle here laid down as to the relative height of the octagonal roof is doubtless correct; yet, whether owing to negligence, or “ want of skill,” in the builders of the Bradford Octagon, or, to the now generally admitted fact, that buildings of this form are less secure than those of a rectangular or square construction, the walls of the above chapel, after having stood little more than forty years, so far gave way as to create serious apprehensions of its safety; and a larger and more commodious place of worship,—the one in Kirkgate, was forthwith erected.

To the octagonal mode of building Mr. Wesley was extremely partial. Judging however, from its disuse, public opinion, since his day, has gone in an opposite direction. The eight-sided edifice will indeed contain a greater number of persons, or a larger portion of merchandise, than any differently constructed building; yet this advantage is far more than counterbalanced by the fact, that as a building it is less secure, and that, save by re-erection, it is incapable of enlargement.

What subscriptions were obtained towards the erection of the Octagon in Bradford, or what the collections

at its opening, does not appear. The line of progress, was however, from the least to the greatest; John Murgatroyd and Richard* Fawcett, when sallying forth on this important errand, receiving from the first house at which they called, the mighty sum of twopence! Every effort in the power of the society at that period, was doubtless made; many of the members cheerfully assisting in digging the foundation, and otherwise aiding the erection of the "house:" whilst, in accordance with the adage, that "Heaven helps those who help themselves," considerable sums in liquidation of the debt remaining on the building, were from time to time allotted from "the General Fund," so called. From this source, in seven successive years, no less a sum than £446. 19s. 2d. was received: yet, if Bradford, from this quarter, received largely, its contributions were almost in an equal ratio. In 1773, for instance, when a general effort was made throughout the Connexion, whilst the "Liverpool circuit subscribed about one hundred pounds," the contributions from Bradford amounted to not less than a hundred and thirty.

The "General Fund," referred to above, was, what is now denominated the "Yearly collection," annually

* This good man,—father of Mr. Richard Fawcett, who in after years took so prominent a part in the affairs of Methodism, and the general interests of the town, was for many years a useful leader and local preacher. The biographer of his brother, Dr. Fawcett, justly observes,—“after a life spent in the unostentatious discharge of the duties of personal religion and christian benevolence, labouring by his example, prayers, and exhortations, to win souls to Christ, he left the world in peace with God, and all mankind.” In his last illness, though but of short duration, he evinced much sweetness of temper, and entire resignation to the will of God. Exercising an implicit and confident reliance on the atonement of the Saviour, he peacefully, yet triumphantly, entered into rest, Jan. 19th, 1807; having been for upwards of fifty years a member of the Methodist Society.

made at the March visitation of the classes. Its then appropriation,—though since limited to the assistance of the poorer circuits in the connexion, and the extension of Methodism in the neglected districts of our own land,—was thus fixed by Mr. Wesley: “Two thirds”* of it, at least, will be allotted for those public debts which call the loudest. The rest will be partly employed in setting at liberty,—in order to their entering the ranks of Itinerancy,—“such local preachers as are tied down by small debts; partly reserved for propagating the gospel where there are none to bear the expenses of the preachers.”

The yearly collection was thus at its first establishment, mainly a Chapel-Fund. The connexional principle then brought to bear upon the exigencies of the body, has since that period, accomplished much. By means of the “General Chapel Fund,” instituted in 1818, upwards of £171,000. of chapel debts have been extinguished; to which, if we add the sum of £44,495. the amount cancelled by grants from the “Centenary Chapel-relief Committee,” a total is presented of more than £215,000. which by these magnanimous efforts has been subtracted from the “debt for building.” We have thus abundant reason to thank God, and take courage.

* From this source, Leeds in 1766, received £10.;—the Chapel at Halifax, a similar sum, and Bradford, £40. The “total debt for building,” throughout the connexion, is this year published as £11,383.; and in expectation of being “totally ruined,” the following measures are enacted:—

1.—“Let no other building be undertaken, until two-thirds of the money are subscribed.

2.—“We will allow nothing to any house which shall be begun after this day, till the debt is reduced to £3,000.”

The expectation of ruin from a building debt of little more than £11,000. will in the present day excite a smile; when at a moderate calculation, the “total debt for building,” now resting on the shoulders of Wesleyan Methodism, cannot be less than fifteen hundred thousand Pounds!

Returning to the Octagon, it must be noted, that in accordance with the auxiliary position which Methodism during the lifetime of Mr. Wesley, and for some years subsequent, generally occupied in reference to the Established Church, no service was held there, in what are termed "church-hours." In order that the whole society and congregation might regularly attend the worship of the Parish Church, the "preaching-house" times of service, were nine in the morning, one in the afternoon, and five in the evening. Nor was it, 'til after the removal of the congregation to their more spacious chapel in Kirkgate, that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered within the pale of Methodism in Bradford. This lingering attachment to the Mother-church, must doubtless be in part attributed to the high esteem and veneration in which the then Vicar of Bradford, the late Rev. John Crosse, was ever held by his Wesleyan parishioners.

That the position of Methodism in reference to the Established Church, has, since the days of its Founder, undergone an important change, cannot be denied. Yet, is this altered state of things the result, not of any imbibed, or cherished hostility to the Church as an Establishment, but of circumstances, which its ministers, whether in their individual or Conferential capacity, have had no power to control.

Methodism is in this day, a spiritual hierarchy distinct and separate from every other; yet fully sustaining the definition given of Christ's visible church,— "a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered, according to Christ's ordinance;" that is, if the maintenance and propagation of the apostolic faith,—if the inculcation of apostolic purity, and the production of fruit, such as crowned the labours of the

apostles themselves, point out the ministers of Methodism as true ambassadors of Christ.

That Methodism *could* have remained a mere society in the Church, no one at all conversant with its history will venture to assert. When, in addition to the delivery from the pulpits of the Establishment of a dry and sapless theology, or heterodoxy in its most obnoxious forms, the clergy were themselves in very many instances, the opponents and persecutors of the Wesleyan societies,—instigating lawless mobs to their injury,—calumniating them from their pulpits, and if not repelling them from the sacramental table, yet regarding them as intruders there ; it cannot be matter of surprise, if, even in Mr. Wesley's day, his people evinced an earnest desire to have amongst themselves, whatever is implied in the constitution of a Christian Church.

The seeds of separation from the Established Church were, in fact, sown during the lifetime of this great man. Several years previous to his decease, service in church-hours was under certain circumstances permitted. In 1786, in answer to the question,—“ In what cases do we allow of service in church-hours ? ” Mr. Wesley answers,

- “ 1. When the minister is a notoriously wicked man.
- “ 2. When he preaches Arian, or any equally pernicious doctrine.
- “ 3. When there are not churches in the town sufficient to contain half the people.
- “ 4. When there is no church at all within two or three miles.”

The sacrament,—administered, it is true, by Clergymen of the Establishment, was also introduced by Mr. Wesley into the unconsecrated chapels of his connexion ; 'til in 1797, after much agitation of the question, the carrying out the principles here involved became to the

Conference a matter of imperative duty ; and in the “Laws of Pacification” then passed, the platform of Methodism, as a church *per se*, was thoughtfully and prayerfully laid.

The legal designation of the Wesleyan societies, as given by Mr. Wesley in the celebrated “Deed of Declaration,” executed and enrolled in 1784, is at once the simplest, and perhaps, most to be approved,—“the people called Methodists.” No other term so aptly embraces *the whole* of the Wesleyan connexion. A small, and gradually decreasing number yet remain Church-methodists,—worshipping, and receiving the sacraments within the pale of the Establishment ; yet, still availing themselves of the peculiar privileges which Methodism yields. Another portion, also small, are in principle Dissenters ; who, whilst refraining from the propagation of their peculiar views, find shelter and nourishment in the Wesleyan fold : yet, the great majority of the societies of Methodism, are either the descendants of its own people, who from earliest infancy have known only the religious usages and worship of their fathers, or, converts from the irreligious world, who, till found by Methodism, were heedless alike of Churchism or Dissent.

To the question, therefore, are Methodists Churchmen ? We answer, No. Are they Dissenters ? We say, No. What then are they ? They are Methodists : attached indeed, from the principles of their Founder, and their frequent public professions, as a body, to the church-establishment of their country, and rejoicing in its welfare ; yet, as a people, dwelling alone ; peculiar in their economy, successful in their movements, and though avowedly, and in fact, “the friends of all, and the enemies of none,” yet regarded with shy-

ness, or treated with *hauteur*, by well nigh every section and *ism* in Christendom. "The high Churchman," observes the lamented author of the life of Wesley, "has persecuted us, because we are separatists; the high Dissenter has often looked upon us with hostility, because we would not see that an establishment, necessarily, and *in se*, involved a sin against the supremacy of Christ; the rigid Calvinist has disliked us, because we hold the redemption of all men; the Pelagianized-arminian, because we contend for salvation by grace; the Antinomian, because we insist upon the perpetual obligation of the moral law; the Moralist, because we exalt faith; the disaffected, because we hold that loyalty and religion are inseparable; the political Tory, because he cannot think that separatists from the church can be loyal to the throne; the Philosopher, because he deems us fanatics; whilst semi-infidel liberals generally exclude us from all share in their liberality, except it be in their liberality of abuse."*

Apologising for this digression, we proceed by placing on record, that in 1767, a house for the residence of the preachers was erected on the chapel premises. The house and its furniture must both have been in perfect keeping with the humble position Methodism in that day occupied, when, from a minute statement still in preservation, the whole expense incurred was under £200. Mr. Thomas Hanby, and Mr. Mosley Cheek, who afterwards became the minister of St. Stephen's Church, in Salford, appear to have been the first preachers resident in Bradford.

From entries in the "circuit-book," commencing 1767, though Bradford itself was not a circuit-town until two years after, it appears, that Bradford, whilst

* Watson's Works, vol. V. p. 343.

forming part of the Birstal circuit, was yet, as to pecuniary matters, separate from its jurisdiction ; having its own "Quarter-board," from whence the preachers resident in Bradford received the small allowances then given. A similar practice subsequently obtained, when, for several years, Halifax formed an important branch of the Bradford circuit. The plan was anti-connexional, and soon became obsolete.

In 1768, the ministerial appointment for the Birstal circuit was Christopher Hopper, Thomas Lee, Daniel Bumstead, and Parson Greenwood ; the two latter residing in Bradford.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM BRADFORD BEING CONSTITUTED THE HEAD OF A CIRCUIT, TO THE REMOVAL OF THE VENERATED WESLEY TO A HAPPIER WORLD.

1769—1791.

Places included in the Bradford circuit—Scanty allowances of the Preachers—Erection of a Chapel at Pudsey—Prosperous state of the Bradford circuit—The Chapel at Eccleshill erected—Singular construction of the Deed—Names of Leaders and Local Preachers in 1781—Joseph Fenton, Thomas Driver, and John Turner noticed—School and preaching room erected at Great-Horton—Remarkable answer to prayer in the case of Mr. Floyd—Attempts made by the Independents in Bradford to induce Mr. Bradburn to become their pastor—Rev. Messrs. Valton and Sutcliffe noticed—Halifax separated from the Bradford circuit—Chapel built at Wichfield—Rev. John Crosse noticed—Bradford Church referred to—Mr. Robertshaw, the first Preacher who dies in Bradford—Death and character of the Rev. Charles Wesley—Mr. Wesley's last visit to Bradford—Unpleasant interview with Eccleshill Trustees—Conference Plan for settlement of Chapels described—Death of the Founder of Methodism.

In 1769, forty six circuits embraced the whole of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Of these Bradford was one; having Halifax,—whose society is represented as “always standing in honourable ranks,” under its wing. On the Bradford side of the circuit, were Great-Horton, Low-Moor, Wibsey, Yeadon, Idle, Windhill, Eccleshill, Shipley, Pudsey, Dudley-Hill, Stanningley, Tong, Little-Horton, Manningham and Bowling. The Halifax branch comprised Elland, Greetland, Sowerby, Skircoat-Green, Wichfield, Blackmires, Bradshaw, Ripponden, Lindley, Norland,

Clifton, Jagger-Green, &c. The preachers appointed to labour in this extensive tract of country, were John Oliver and Thomas Lee. The number of members returned at the close of the year, was eight hundred and seven.

The pecuniary arrangements of Methodism at this period, were far from being complete. Very inadequate provision was then made for the wants of those devoted men, who at much personal risk, and in the midst of much privation, "laboured in the word and doctrine." So extensively was this the case, that many who bade fair to be the brightest ornaments of the Wesleyan Itinerancy, as their families increased, were driven back to business, merely to secure the bread that perisheth. Indeed, for many years during the infancy of Methodism, no *stated* provision whatever was made for its ministry. As the preachers journeyed to and fro, the several societies when able, administered to their necessities: yet these were often unrelieved. The following scale of allowances, extracted from the Bradford circuit-book, for 1770, is given as a specimen of the usage of the connexion, in what was then regarded as an advanced era of its financial movements:—

| | £. s. d. |
|--|----------|
| The Preacher's weekly board, thirteen weeks at 3s. 6d. | 2 5 6 |
| Quarterage..... | 3 0 0 |
| Ditto for Wife..... | 1 17 6 |
| Allowed for Servant..... | 0 12 6 |
| Ditto for Turnpikes..... | 0 6 0 |
| Total for one Quarter..... | £8 1 6 |

To those, not conversant with methodistic affairs, it may be necessary to state, that the sum allowed under the head of "weekly-board," was designed for the

maintenance of the family ; or, as somewhat technically entered in one page of the society's records,—“ for eating.” The “ Quarterage,” was intended to meet the expence of clothing, books, &c. Less than thirty three pounds per annum, was thus the whole income of the preacher and his family, for clothing, maintenance, and other necessaries ! On this, a family if numerous might exist, but could hardly be said to live. The preacher, it is true, was much from home ; provisions too, must have been considerably cheaper than in this day ; still, help from other sources would be imperatively needed. Since then, however, the Wesleyan connexion has not been slow to learn the apostolic precept,—“ let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth, in all good things.”

In 1772, an entry in the circuit-book presents the whole expense incurred in the erection of the Octagon, as £997. 8s. 9d. To the account then given, as vouching its correctness, are the signatures, Christopher Hopper, John Butler, Richard Fawcett, John Murgatroyd, Nathaniel Dracup. Richard Stocks, who took a prominent part in the building of the chapel, appears to have acted as the first chapel steward.

In the summer of this year, Mr. Wesley again visited Bradford. “ Monday, July 6,” writes he, “ at noon, I preached to a large congregation at Bingley, and at Bradford in the evening. From this comfortable place on Wednesday 8th, I went to Halifax.” In the society's accounts for the quarter, there is a financial remembrance of this visit, which seems to intimate, that several preachers from the neighbourhood must have spent the Tuesday with Mr. Wesley at Bradford ; the “ extraordinary expense of Mr. Wesley and company” being entered as £1. 2s. 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. About this time also, an item occurs, with which perhaps, the stewards of

this day are but triflingly, if at all conversant,—“the Barber, for one year dressing of the wigs, six shillings.”

At the Conference of 1773, Mr. Thomas Taylor was appointed to the superintendence of the Bradford circuit. “I had the happiness,” says he, “of being removed to Bradford. My last year’s treatment* had left a soreness on my mind, but it was soon healed by a kind people. I did not find much life among them at first, but whatever I said was well received: my fellow-labourers also, (Messrs. Barker and Tennant,) joined hand in hand, so that the work of God was greatly revived.”

On the Michaelmas Sunday of this year, the new “Preaching-house” recently erected at Pudsey, was opened by Mr. Taylor. The chapel, measuring fourteen yards by twelve, was situate at the “top of the Low-town,” and gave accommodation to about four hundred hearers. In the number of the old trustees, are found the names, George Beecroft, Edward Tindall, Joseph Brown, Samuel Fenton, and John Scholfield. This ancient “house of prayer” was in 1815, superseded by the erection of an elegant and commodious chapel in the higher part of the town.

In the second year of Mr. Taylor’s sojourn in Bradford, he observes, “we had a blessed outpouring of the Spirit; believers were daily multiplying, so that during these two years above six hundred souls were added to the societies, and many, nay most of them continue to this day, 1780. Great numbers likewise were renewed in love, and enabled to ‘rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks.’”

* Some unpleasantnesses Mr. Taylor had met with in the Birstall circuit, are here referred to.

The cheering representation of the Bradford societies given above, is fully confirmed by Mr. Wesley, when thus narrating two subsequent visits to this "comfortable place." "Thursday, April 24, 1774. This evening and the next, I preached to the lively congregation at Bradford, and was much comforted; so were many, indeed all that earnestly desired to recover the whole image of God."

"Friday, August 4, 1775. I preached at Bradford, where the people are all alive. Many have lately experienced the great salvation, and their zeal has been a general blessing. Indeed, this I always observe,—wherever a work of sanctification breaks out, the whole work of God prospers. Some are convinced of sin, and others justified, and all stirred up to greater earnestness for salvation. I breakfasted at Great-Horton.* Two or three of the neighbours then came in to prayer. Quickly the house was filled, and in a few minutes after, also the space before the door. I saw the opportunity, and without delay, got upon the horse-block in the yard. Abundance of children crowded round me, and round them a numerous congregation. So I gave them an earnest exhortation, and then commended them to the grace of God."

Towards the close of this year, the third chapel in the immediate vicinity of Bradford, was erected at Eccleshill; the foundation being laid in the month of May, 1775, and the chapel opened by Mr. Allen the November following. The society in this village then amounted to nearly sixty members, who for some time had painfully felt the want of sanctuary accommodation; their only place of worship heretofore, having been a private house. Principally through the exer-

* At the house of John Hodgson, Horton-Fold, one of the trustees of the Octagon chapel.

tions of Zechariah and Thomas Yewdall, the new "Preaching-house" was built, and finished "with only a small debt upon it." The chapel was indeed secured to Methodism; none, according to the deed, being allowed to "perform divine service" there, save "the Rev. John Wesley and his successors only;" yet, the strangely anti-connexional clauses subsequently inserted, gave rise in after years, to much uneasiness, and proved a serious hinderance to the work of God.

The nine trustees,* in whom the premises were vested, were, by the deed, entitled to choose their own minister; whilst by the same document were they empowered, without assigning any reason, without giving any notice, "to dismiss him † at their pleasure!" Another clause provided, that "in case their said religion should at any time be taken from them," or not be "tolerated by the legislature," the trustees might then let the building for whatever purpose they saw fit. The deed itself, was in all probability, the production of an individual of low dissenting notions, who though not connected with the Eccleshill society, had yet secured a controlling influence over its proceedings. Hence in the deed, the Methodists are designated "Protestant Dissenters," and the house a "Meeting-

* John Child, Joshua Hall, Abraham Kitson, Moses Crabtree, John Page, Thomas Yewdall, Thomas Read, Thomas Lee, and William Read.

† One is led to smile at the extraordinary powers assumed by these, we hope, well meaning men, or rather, claimed for them by their presbyterian adviser, when, at the period the deed was executed, the whole sum raised by the Eccleshill society towards the support of the ministry did not amount to twenty shillings per quarter! The obnoxious clauses above quoted, were indeed from the very first, *practically* null and void; yet, had the trustees been able to substantiate their supposed rights, the man perhaps, has not yet been born, however disinterested his movements, who would consent to serve them on the above conditions.

house ;" terms, which the founder of the body strongly repudiated.

In 1776, Mr. Allen was re-appointed to the Bradford circuit, having as his colleagues Messrs. Lee and Hudson ; the latter of whom, an ordained clergyman, renounced during the year his connection with Methodism.

In this, and the following year, Bradford was again visited by Mr. Wesley. " April 26, 1776," writes he, " I preached at Bradford, on the wise man that builds his house upon a rock ; that is, who builds his hope of heaven on no other foundation than doing these sayings contained in the sermon on the mount ; although in another sense, we build not upon his sayings, but his sufferings."

" Friday, June 6, 1777, I preached at Bradford, where a blessed work has increased ever since William Brammah was here. ' Hath not God chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise ?'

Messrs. Hopper, Benson, and Lee, were this year the preachers stationed on the Bradford circuit. " God was with us," writes Mr. Hopper, " and gave us success." The appointment of the apostolic Benson, whose name, even at this day, is " as ointment poured forth," proved a singular benefit not only to the circuit, but also the surrounding neighbourhood. His preaching was " with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven," and was greatly blessed to the conversion and edification of many. Both at this period, and when subsequently stationed on the circuit, his popularity was " surprisingly great ;" crowds flocking from all parts wherever his coming was expected. Pleasing indication was thus given of that distinguished eminence, to which as a preacher and divine he subsequently attained.

Towards the close of Mr. Hopper's labours in the Bradford circuit, an entry appears in the Stewards' book, creditable alike to all the parties concerned :—

“ We have this day settled our accounts in a friendly manner, agreeable to justice, mercy, and truth, and do earnestly pray, that brotherly love may continue.

“ As witness our hands this 28th of June, 1779,

CHRISTOPHER HOPPER, } *Preachers.*
THOMAS JOHNSON, }

RICHARD THORNTON, }
JOHN GARFORTH, } *Stewards.*
ISAAC DUCKWORTH,

NATHANIEL DRACUP, }
JOHN MURGATROYD, } *Trustees.*

The pecuniary affairs of the circuit appear to have been at this time in a flourishing state. The “ weekly board” had been considerably advanced; the circuit-stewards had cash in hand; whilst the Trustees of the Octagon, recognizing the principle, that whatever renders the sittings of a chapel rentable, should be supported from its funds, had contributed this quarter, no less than four guineas to the circuit-board.

In the spring of 1780, Mr. Wesley visiting Bradford, bears his testimony to the general stability of the society. “ I was well pleased,” writes he, “ to find many both men and women, who had never suffered any decay since they were perfected in love.” Numerous in that day were the witnesses of this great salvation; so that, contrasted with the present, it would almost seem that the former days were better than these; yet, .

“ Thine arm, Lord, is not shortened now;
It wants not now, its power to save!”

From an early period in the history of Methodism, “catalogues of the societies” were directed to be kept in the several circuits of the connexion. The first of this kind, which occurs in the records of the Bradford circuit is for the year 1781, in the hand writing of Mr. Mather, one of the most eminent of the early Methodist preachers. The document is interestingly minute; giving, in addition to the names of the members, their religious state,—whether seekers of salvation, or “justified” persons, or professing to be made “perfect in love;”—the offices sustained in their connexion with the society, their worldly occupation, and generally also, their places of residence.

The following extract presents the names of the Leaders and Local Preachers of that day, together with the number in society in the several places of the circuit.

I. BRADFORD;—including Little-Horton and Manganese,—293 Members.

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Leaders.</i> —Richard Stocks, | Matthew Brown, |
| George Render, | Isaac Haigh, |
| William Hainsworth, | Thomas Driver, |
| John Garforth, | William Sugden, |
| Richard Thornton, | William Hollings, |
| Thomas Haigh, | Samuel Wood. |
| William Varley, | John Swaine. |
| Squire Loftus, | |

II. LOW-MOOR;—56 Members.

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| <i>Leaders.</i> —Thomas Worsnop, | George Hoyle. |
|----------------------------------|---------------|

III. GREAT-HORTON, including Clayton-Heights, and Brown-Royd;—175 Members.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| <i>Leaders.</i> —John Murgatroyd, | Thomas Dobson, |
| Nathaniel Dracup, | John Shutt, |
| John Hodgson, | John Smith, |
| Richard Fawcett, | James Wilkinson, |

John Haley, James Thorp..
 Jonathan Hudson,

IV. ECCLESHILL;—105 Members.

Leaders.—John Child,
 Thomas Yewdall,
 Moses Crabtree, John Rhodes,
 Timothy Wilson,
 Wm. Stephenson.

V. PUDSEY;—149 Members.

Leaders.—John Turner of Farsley,
 Joseph Fenton, Joseph Brown,
 Edmund Tindall, James Ackroyd.

VI. TEMPLE-NEWSOME;—36 Members.

Leaders.—Isaac Duckworth, John Clayton.

VII. WINDHILL;—91 Members.

Leaders.—John Hudson, Samuel Denby.
 Stephen Skirrow,

DUDLEY-HILL. . . 22 Members, John Scholefield, Leader,
 CUTLER HEIGHTS, 22 . . do Jonathan Dennison . . do.
 BANK-TOP 20 . . do Jonas Lightowler, do.
 IDLE 33 . . do John Lister do.
 FARSLY 18 . . do John Turner, do.
 CALVERLEY 16 . . do James Overend, * do.
 FARNLEY 20 . . do William Farrar do.
 COAT-GAP 16 . . do Caleb Jennings do.

The number in society throughout the Bradford branch of the circuit, was this year, 1072.

The circuit stewards were John Garforth and Thomas Haigh,—grandfather of Mr. Haigh, of 'the Savings' Bank, a worthy representative of his methodistic ancestor.

* See Note E.

The following are the names of those who in 1781, officiated as Local Preachers in the Bradford circuit:—

Nathaniel Dracup, Great-Horton,
 Joseph Fenton, Pudsey,
 Thomas Driver, Bradford,
 Thomas Haigh, do.
 William Stephenson, ... Eccleshill,
 Richard Fawcett, Great-Horton,
 John Turner, Farsley,
 Benjamin Coates, Idle.

Joseph Fenton was one of the most useful preachers of his day, and is said to have been a favourite with Mr. Wesley. He was an apt expounder of divine truth, dwelling chiefly on the religion of the heart. His style in the pulpit was sententious. Combining with plainness of speech, much affection and fervour, he was greatly esteemed by the congregations amongst whom he laboured. At the commencement of his career as a preacher, he was sent to Hull, to fill up some chasm in the itinerancy there, and was at once recognized as a youth of great ministerial promise; but marrying suddenly, and without leave,—or as the early minutes would record, “hand over head,” Fenton at the ensuing Conference returned to his secular employ, and throughout his subsequent movements, maintained the character of an upright, pious man, and a highly useful local preacher.

Driver, belonged another class; yet was he for many years an acceptable and useful preacher. He had been from childhood blind, and previous to his conversion, gained a livelihood by frequenting as a “musician” the various public-houses in the neighbourhood. Soon after his connection with Methodism, he was usefully employed as a class-leader and preacher, and was much beloved. He was gifted with a remarkably quick and

retentive memory,—giving out his hymns, and making lengthened quotations from Scripture with great correctness. For many years he was wholly supported by the society, and was thus enabled to devote all his energies to the service of the church. He died at Barnard-Castle.

John Turner may be justly regarded as the father of Methodism in Farsley. For very many years, his house was there the sanctuary of Methodism, and the home of its ministers. He entered into rest, March 1, 1808, having been for upwards of fifty years a member of the methodist society.

William Stephenson entered the itinerary, and after labouring for awhile in Scotland, ended his ministerial career elsewhere.

Such, sixty years ago, was the state of the Bradford circuit, as to its officers and members. If, from the enumeration here given, we separate the Pudsey, Eccleshill, Windhill, and Idle societies,—since allotted to other circuits,—it will appear, that within precisely the same extent of ground, now occupied by the Bradford West and East circuits, there were in 1781, 694 members, five local preachers, and one* chapel! The *status* of 1841, gives 3568 members, 57 local preachers, and, exclusive of several school-rooms, used as places for preaching, not less than 14 chapels, yielding sanctuary accommodation to little short of nine thousand hearers!

Cheering as this statement must be to every lover of our Zion,—influential as is the position now occupied by Wesleyan Methodism in Bradford and its neigh-

* The preaching at Great-Horton was at this period, held in what is now denominated “the old school;” a room built in 1776, by general subscription of the inhabitants; partly, as a school for children of all denominations, and partly as a Preaching-room for the use of the methodists.

bourhood,—the fact must not be concealed, that contrasted with the masses of the population, who, notwithstanding the increased, and to a certain extent, successful efforts of other denominations of Christians, still continue

“Strangers, yea, enemies to God,”

but little comparatively has been effected. The prevalence of vice, and worldliness, and infidelity, in their unnumbered forms, demands in this day, the increased, zealous, and untiring exertions of every minister, and leader, and member of the Wesleyan societies.

In the Midsummer of 1781, Mr. Wesley being on his way to the Conference in Leeds, preached at Bradford, “to thousands upon thousands, on, ‘the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.’” About seventy preachers were present at the Conference; amongst whom was the sainted Fletcher of Madeley, whose ministrations in Leeds, and shortly after in Bradford also, were in a remarkable degree accompanied with the “unction of the Holy One.” Messrs. Bradburn, Floyd, and Oliver, were this year appointed to labour in the Bradford circuit.

Respecting Mr. Floyd, who had formerly practised as a surgeon, and who in 1782, desisted from the itinerant work,—the “Minutes” say, without blame,—Mr. Wesley has recorded the following singular interposition.

“Monday, April 22, 1782, I preached about eleven in Todmorden church. On Friday, I got to Halifax, where Mr. Floyd lay in a high fever, almost dead for want of sleep. This was prevented by the violent pain

in one of his feet, which was much swelled, and so sore, it could not be touched. We joined in prayer that God would fulfil his word, and give his beloved sleep. Presently the swelling, the soreness, and pain were gone, and he had a good night's rest." Instances of a similar kind, in which God in an especial manner has listened to the supplications of them that fear him, are of frequent occurrence in the journal of this venerated man.

At the Conference of 1782, Mr. Bradburn was appointed a second year to the Bradford circuit, having as his colleagues Messrs. Mitchell and Benson. The ministry of Mr. Bradburn, then in the zenith of his popularity and usefulness, created a strong sensation in the town and neighbourhood; so much so, that the Independents, who had recently erected a new chapel in Little-Horton lane, strongly and repeatedly urged him to take the pastoral charge of their church and congregation. For this, in connection with the extraordinary abilities of this gifted man, two reasons may perhaps be given. 1. Most of the founders of the Independent interest in Bradford, had either been members of the methodist society, or had sat under its ministry. 2. Mr. Bradburn, to the exclusion of controversial matters, had in his public ministry, dwelt chiefly on the *fundamental truths* of our holy religion; truths, in which all who "hold the head" cordially agree. Hence, the following entry in his journal, bearing date Sept. 30, 1782: "Though I firmly believe the leading doctrines of the methodists, and preach them clearly, yet as I dwell mostly on the dreadful state of man by the fall of Adam, and the recovery by Jesus Christ, and on this foundation endeavour to build inward and outward holiness, saying little or nothing about the calvinian controversy, the Independents have made me

very large offers.* This is the more trying to me now, as I have not above £50. per annum, to maintain myself, wife, child, and servant ; but feeling that temporal advantages ought not to sway me, I have refused."

For several successive years, the only record of the state of Methodism in the Bradford circuit, is given in the memoirs of Messrs. Valton and Taylor, who, with Mr. John Shaw, were at the conference of 1784, appointed to this important sphere of itinerant labour.

* At a subsequent period, when still more tempting offers were made by the Independents under the care of Mr. Edwards, of the White-Chapel, Leeds, Mr. Bradburn gives his views more fully : "Having suffered a great deal," observes he, "both in my character and mind, on account of my manner of preaching in Dublin ; particularly in regard to some expressions I used in the sincerity of my heart, relative to the calvinian controversy, and which many of my friends thought too strong ; I began, on my removal from thence, to examine whether I could not be equally useful to others, and more comfortable in my own soul, by dropping those expressions, which, however true, seemed to be hardly laudable. I made the trial, and soon found that my preaching was much more satisfactory, both to myself and the people. I therefore determined to avoid, as much as possible, meddling with any of the contested points, and to preach the truth in as inoffensive a manner as I could with a good conscience. In this spirit I came to England, and spent my first year without any uneasiness about doctrines. When I went to Bradford, I had not the most distant thought of any wrong use being made of this moderation : but some who were of the opposite opinions took occasion to represent me as a calvinist ; and not a few of our own people expressed a great deal of jealousy about me. I immediately cleared myself to any who spoke to me in private ; and more expressly, if possible, at the quarterly meeting, and at large in the society. I even preached some sermons on the most doubtful points in dispute. These steps, together with my absolute refusal of the new independent chapel, which had been offered to me, seemed to satisfy even the most scrupulous, that I was a real methodist. For about nine or ten months before I left Bradford, all was peace, or seemed so."

"It was from principle and conscience," proceeds Mr. Bradburn, "that I rejected these offers ; being resolved to go forward in the way wherein God had called and blessed me, and to live and die a Methodist Preacher."

Mr. Valton, who at this period acted as Mr. Wesley's "assistant" in the Bradford circuit, was one of the most eminent and useful preachers of his day. His style in the pulpit is said to have very much resembled that of Mr. Wesley; and not unfrequently his ministrations were in a remarkable manner attended with "power from on high." He entered upon his labours in this circuit in the true spirit of an evangelist, and with confident expectations of Divine success; yet, owing to severe and protracted affliction, his hopes were only partially realised. "My labours," observes he, at the close of his sojourn here, "were much the same as in the Birstal circuit, only my declining state of health did not allow me to hold many watch-nights. I have therefore, bowed to the Divine restraints, and held frequent prayer-meetings after preaching, and been favoured with the power of the Holy Ghost. In these exercises, many souls have been converted during the last two years, and several hundreds added to the different societies."

Under Mr. Valton's direction, the truly reverend and amiable Joseph Sutcliffe, who for upwards of half a century has graced the Wesleyan ministry, commenced in Pudsey, his official career in the methodist society; being appointed first, the leader of a class;—shortly after, a local preacher, and in 1786, on the recommendation of Mr. Valton, sent by Mr. Wesley to labour in the Redruth circuit.

Mr. Taylor, as the second preacher, resided in Halifax. "I removed," says he, "from Sheffield to Halifax with some degree of satisfaction. But there had been a falling away; some had even grown cold and indifferent; and some, I doubt, were quite fallen asleep. I found some cause of mourning that many had departed from the faith, and the greater part had left their first love. Indeed, it is no new thing..... However,

some souls were gathered in, and the work a little revived."

In 1785, Halifax* was separated from Bradford, and constituted the head of a circuit ; having under its jurisdiction,—with the exception of Wichfield and Blackmires, the places previously mentioned as forming the Halifax branch of the Bradford circuit. The ministerial appointment this year was,

BRADFORD....John Valton, John Shaw, Henry Foster.
HALIFAXJohn Allen, Thomas Johnson.

The number of members in the respective circuits, was, Bradford, 1088, Halifax, 974.

Towards the close of the year, a new chapel was opened at Wichfield by Mr. Valton, when serious alarm was excited by the breaking of an old bench. In consequence of this, and also, to accommodate the multitude who tried in vain to obtain admission, the service was concluded out of doors. The chapel, unfortunately, was anti-methodistically settled ; and, as in almost every similar instance, till the evil was remedied, uneasiness and declension were the sad result.

In the spring of 1786, Mr. Wesley paid his last visit but one to the neighbourhood of Bradford. " Friday, April 21," writes he, " I preached at Yeadon ; where the work of God is rapidly going forward. Such a company of loving children I have nowhere seen, but at Oldham, near Manchester. Sunday, 23, I preached in Haworth church in the morning ; and Bingley church in the afternoon ; but as there were many hundreds that could not get in, Mr. Atmore preached abroad at the same time. In the evening I

* For an account of the rise and progress of Methodism in Halifax, the reader may consult " A Sketch of Methodism in Halifax and its vicinity, by William Hatton ;" or a larger work on the same subject published by Mr. J. U. Walker, of Halifax.

preached to a huge multitude at Bradford. Surely the people of this town are highly favoured, having both a Vicar and a Curate that preach the truth."

The Vicar here referred to, was the late Rev. John Crosse, A. M., who in 1784, was presented to the vicarage of Bradford; where for upwards of thirty years, he discharged with exemplary fidelity and zeal, the onerous duties of the ministerial office. Mr. Crosse was the personal friend of the venerated Wesley and Fletcher. Arminian in sentiment, and rejoicing in the spread of vital godliness, he contemplated the system of Methodism, not as hostile to the interests of the Establishment, but as forming an important auxiliary to the church itself. To the ministers of Methodism, and indeed to good men of every name, he gave the hand of fellowship, yet without any compromise of principle, as a minister of the church, or any lessening of his zeal for its institutions and welfare. In his movements as a Clergyman, the fact was pleasingly confirmed, that a friendly, yet judicious recognition of Wesleyan Methodism, so far from proving injurious to the interests of the church, directly tends to the extension of its influence. Never, it may be safely affirmed, was Church-of-Englandism in Bradford, in so flourishing a state,—never had the church itself so strong a hold upon the esteem and good-will of the population at large, as under the Vicarial influence and oversight of the lamented Crosse. "So rapidly and greatly" had the congregation of the Parish Church* increased under his ministry, "that notwith-

* This ancient structure, dedicated to St. Peter, was erected in the reign of the sixth Henry, but was not finished till 1458. The steeple, in the erection of which fifteen years were consumed, was not completed till nearly half a century later. Bradford is said to have been "a member of the ancient Saxon Parish of Dewsbury," which once embraced an area of 400 miles; eight shillings are still paid annually at Easter to the Vicar of Dewsbury.

standing the erection of three new galleries," accommodation was still wanting for those who flocked to hear. To meet this exigency, "his parishioners by voluntary subscription erected the new church in this town, as well as the chapel at Horton."

The pulpit addresses of this eminent man were truly evangelical, and delivered with peculiar fervour. As a catechiser of the young, and as a visitor of the sick, he was literally indefatigable. Even the loss of his sight led to no relaxation in the discharge of these important duties. Affable in his manners, and exemplifying throughout the whole of his deportment, the true spirit of his high and holy office, he secured the esteem, and lived in the affections of his numerous parishioners.

Having lived to Christ, death to him was gain. In his last illness, his confidence in God was strong and unshaken. Some of his last words were,—“ Dying is no more to me than passing from one chamber to another. I have no fear of death. I had rather die than live. I long to depart, and be with Christ. ‘Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ:’ ” He rested from his labours, June 17, 1816.

During the appointment of Messrs. Collins and Robertshaw in 1787, to the Bradford circuit, several dissensions unhappily arose. At Eccleshill, in the attempt to gain possession of the key of the chapel, much unhallowed strife took place; for which perhaps, to neither party, will the Judge of all ever say, “ Well done! ” In Bradford also, “ the bond of peace ” was broken; so that, at the close of the year, a considerable decrease of members is reported. Happy is that society, in whose oneness of spirit, affection, and effort, the prayer of the Redeemer is fulfilled, “ that they all may be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that

they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

Mr. Robertshaw's appointment to the Bradford circuit, was the last scene of labour allotted him on earth: he died in the harness, and died well. In a letter from Mr. Collins, dated Feb. 1788, it is stated, "Our dear Brother Robertshaw finished his course in the Lord, yesterday morning about four o'clock. He was in general disordered in his body, but steady and regular in attending to his work of faith and labour of love, when in the least degree able; nay, sometimes, he exceeded the bounds. He was very much troubled with gravel and stone, and the general consequences which attend such a violent thorn in the flesh. But in and through all appeared the christian and the man of God; growing brighter in the fire."

In the Conference minutes for this year, in answer to the question, Who have died? is found,*

"1. Jeremiah Robertshaw, who was a good soldier of Jesus Christ, fairly worn out in his Master's service. He was a pattern of patience for many years, labour-

* And also, "5. Mr. Charles Wesley, who, after spending fourscore years with much sorrow and pain, quietly retired into Abraham's bosom. He had no disease, but after a gradual decay of some months,

'The weary wheels of life stood still at last.'

His least praise was, his talent for poetry: although Dr. Watts did not scruple to say, that 'that single poem "Wrestling Jacob," was worth all the verses he himself had written.'

Such the unassuming, yet beautifully expressed memorial, of one of the Founders of Wesleyan Methodism. One whose incomparable Hymns, present a metrical compendium of doctrinal and practical divinity, which, equally with the writings of his brother John, defines the creed, and gives direction to the religious tastes and habits of the Wesleyan Methodists. The sermons of John, and the hymns of Charles, constitute a boon, which next to the volume of inspired truth, the Methodists will ever prize.

Mr. Charles Wesley closed a long and eminently useful life, March 29th, 1788, *Æt. 79.*

ing under sharp, and almost continued pain ; of meekness and gentleness to all men, and of simplicity and godly sincerity."

His death appears to have been the first ministerial bereavement witnessed in the Bradford circuit.

May 2, 1788, Mr. Wesley, having nearly completed his eighty-fifth year, visits Bradford for the last time. To those, who for upwards of forty years had been benefited by the frequent visits of this honoured man, and with him had rejoiced in the establishment and spread of the kingdom of the Saviour, the interview must have been peculiarly affecting. His patriarchal aspect,—his time-shaken, though yet sprightly frame, whilst calling up in contrast, the reminiscences of former days, must also have awakened the apprehension, that they would "see his face no more." To them, however, as well as to their descendants in the present day, the thought could not be otherwise than pleasing, that Bradford was a spot, the venerated Wesley *loved* to visit.

The day preceding, Mr. Wesley preached at Wakefield. "Friday, May 2," says he, "I went on to Bradford. I feared the jars which had been here, would have lessened the congregation ; but it was as large as ever I remember it on a week-day, and as deeply attentive as ever. A large number attended again at five* in the morning. In the afternoon, I spent some hours with the Trustees of Eccleshill house ; but I might as well have talked to so many posts."

From the testimony of Moses Crabtree, one of the Trustees then present,—for all were not like minded, we are fully justified in asserting, that the above record was penned under the influence of a truly christian and for-

* One who was present on this occasion, represents the Octagon chapel as well filled at that early hour.

bearing temper. Mr. Wesley's venerable appearance,—his age and character,—the peculiar relation in which he stood to his followers, ought to have secured to him, if not respect, yet at least the decencies of civilised life.

The proper settlement of the Eccleshill "House" was a matter in which Mr. Wesley had manifested much anxiety, and which he had diligently laboured to secure. Many, though not recorded in his journal, were his visits to the place, in order to accomplish this important object. And why? The founder of the body was a man of peace; he anxiously desired in Eccleshill, as elsewhere, the preservation and progress of the work of God. In the unconstitutional settlement of the chapel there, he not only saw a direct invasion of the connexional principle so essential to the peace and unity of the Wesleyan societies, but also a platform of interminable uneasiness and dispute,* and endeavoured to avert the threatened evil. Subsequent events in Eccleshill have but too painfully evinced the correctness of his views.

* His views on this subject, are given with great explicitness, in the following letter addressed to Mr. Bradburn, when stationed in the Bradford circuit.

London, Nov. 9, 1782.

"Dear Sammy,

I abhor the thought of giving to twenty men the power to place or displace the preachers in their congregations. How would he then dare to speak an unpleasing truth? And, if he did, what would become of him? This must never be the case while I live among the Methodists. And Birstal is a leading case; the first of an avowed violation of our plan. Therefore, the point must be carried for the Methodist Preachers, now or never; and I alone can carry it; which I will, God being my helper.

"You are not a match for the silver tongue, nor brother Hopper. But, do not, to please any of your new friends, forsake

Your true old friend

JOHN WESLEY."

The attempt to settle the then *new* chapel at Birstal on the plan of Independency, is here referred to.

The “Form of settlement” of the chapels of the connexion, having been so frequently published, almost from the commencement of Methodism, one is led to wonder that any misapprehension on the subject should still exist.

To meet such cases, as well as for the information of the junior members of the societies and congregations in the Bradford circuit, we give the following condensed epitome of the Conference plan.

I. The appropriation of the chapel to the purposes for which it was built is effectually and permanently secured. Except in cases of extreme embarrassment, or in order to the erection of a larger chapel in its room, neither preachers nor trustees can ever alienate the property from Wesleyan Methodism. “From time to time, and at all times after the erection thereof,” the chapel can only “be used, occupied, and enjoyed, as, and for a place of religious worship, by a congregation of Protestants, of the people called Methodists, in the connexion established by the late Rev. John Wesley; and for public, and other meetings, and services, held according to the general rules and usage of the said people called Methodists.”

II. The pulpit, together with the religious services held in the chapel, is under the direction of the superintendent of the circuit for the time being; such persons only being allowed “to preach and expound God’s holy word, and to perform the usual acts of religious worship therein,” as are appointed by the Conference of the people called Methodists, or “from time to time duly permitted or appointed, according to the general rules and usage of the said people called Methodists, by the superintendent preacher for the time being of the circuit, in which the said chapel shall for the time being

be situated." "The times and manner of the various services and ordinances of religious worship to be observed and performed in the said chapel," are also placed under the same jurisdiction.

III. The Trustees, as responsible for the monies borrowed, have the *entire* direction of the proceeds of the chapel; and in cases of extreme embarrassment, after having given six months' notice of their intention to the Conference,—should no relief be gained, may sell, or otherwise dispose of the chapel, to re-imburse themselves.

IV. No doctrine or practice is to be taught, or promulgated in the chapel, "contrary to what is contained in certain notes on the New Testament, commonly reputed to be the notes of the Rev. John Wesley, and in the first four volumes of sermons, commonly reputed to be written and published by him."

V. In case of immorality, erroneousness in doctrine, or deficiency in ability, on the part of any preacher appointed to the chapel, the Trustees, or the majority of them,—or, the Stewards and Leaders of the Society connected with the chapel, or a majority of them, have power to summon the Preachers of the District, together with the Trustees, Stewards, and Leaders of the Circuit, in which the chapel is situate; when, if in the opinion of the majority of the meeting so constituted, the charge is proved, "such preacher shall be considered as removed from the circuit," in which the chapel is for the time being situate.

VI. Any trustee or trustees withdrawing, or duly excluded from the Methodist Society for six months, shall, upon the request in writing of the other trustees, or a majority of them, cease to act; and on being indemnified, shall convey the trust estate to the other trustees.

VII. Upon the decease of any trustee, the surviving

trustees shall upon the request of his representatives, and at their expense, indemnify them from the trustee-liabilities of the deceased.

Such, with some minor, yet important regulations, are the leading features of the Conference Plan, as given in the "Model Deed;" pursuant to which, the chapels of Wesleyanism are in this day settled. On no other plan, indeed, can the objects contemplated in the erection of any methodist chapel, be secured. The opposition therefore, occasionally manifested to the principles herein embodied, can only be the offspring, either of ignorance or disaffection.

From his unpleasant interview with the Trustees* of "Eccleshill house," Mr. Wesley in the evening, preached at Bradford; and with a buoyancy of spirit, almost peculiar to himself, proceeds,—"we had a lovely congregation again, to whom I explained the former part of Rev. xiv. These had ears to hear, and many of them rejoiced with joy full of glory."

The following morning, Sunday, May 4, Mr. Wesley preached in the parish church. The place, though large, was densely filled, so that it was only with extreme difficulty, the venerable man could reach the pulpit. "It was," however, says he, "worth all the labour: I strongly applied those words in the Epistle for the day,—'The end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.' It seemed as if the whole congregation was moved. I believe that hour will not soon be forgotten."

Mr. Wesley, having in the sermon dwelt largely, and

* The meeting was held in the house of John Child, and instead of being restricted to the Trustees, was open to all comers;—a sort of town's-meeting, in fact, on the matter. The chapel itself is yet standing; and so far from having been superseded by a larger, has not even undergone the slightest enlargement; and yet the population of the village has increased fourfold.

with peculiar energy, on the solemnities of the latter days, and quoted the opinion of Bengelius, as to the commencement of the Saviour's Millennial reign, a report arose, and was quickly circulated throughout the kingdom, that he had ventured to predict the very year of the world's destruction.

To Mr. Hopper, who wrote to him on the subject, he thus replies,—“ I said nothing less or more in Bradford church, concerning the end of the world, neither concerning my own opinion, but what follows;—that Bengelius had given it as his opinion, not that the world would then end, but that the Millennial reign of Christ would begin in the year 1836. I have no opinion at all upon the head: I can determine nothing at all about it. These calculations are far above, out of my sight. I have only one thing to do,—to save my soul and those that hear me.”

How far the conjecture here referred to, was well founded, time has shewn: the attempt to make out, from the predictions of Scripture, the times and seasons of the future, has almost in every instance proved abortive. Mr. Wesley's sobriety of judgment, as a divine strikingly appears in his reply to Mr. Hopper; whilst the closing sentence, expressive of the firm, unfaltering resolution of this devoted man, cannot fail to awaken feelings of peculiar interest. After upwards of sixty years of arduous ministerial toil,—“ in journeys often,—in labours more abundant,”—he still declares, “ I have only one thing to do; to save my soul and those that hear me:” an admirable motto for every Christian minister!

Such as given above, is the record of Mr. Wesley's last visit to Bradford, or its immediate vicinity. In little less than three years from which period, “ full of days,”—his hoary head “ a crown of glory,”—the eve-

ning of his well spent life, bright and unclouded, this eminently useful man, breathed in holy triumph his soul to God. The following epitaph, beautifully pourtraying his character, and labours, and success, is inscribed upon a marble tablet, in the City-road chapel, London :—

“THE BEST OF ALL IS, GOD IS WITH US.”

*Sacred to the Memory of
THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, M.A.*

SOMETIMES FELLOW OF LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

A man in learning and sincere piety,
scarcely inferior to any:

In zeal, ministerial labours, and extensive usefulness,
superior, perhaps, to all men, since the days of St. Paul.

Regardless of fatigue, personal danger, and disgrace,
he went out into the highways and hedges,
calling sinners to repentance,
and publishing the gospel of Peace.

He was the Founder of the Methodist Societies,
and the chief promoter and Patron
of the plan of Itinerant Preaching,
which he extended through Great Britain and Ireland,
the West-Indies and America, with unexampled success.

He was born the xvii. of June, MDCCIII.
and died the II. of March, MDCCXCI.
in sure and certain hope of eternal life,
through the atonement and mediation of
a crucified Saviour.

He was sixty-five years in the Ministry,
and fifty-two an Itinerant Preacher;
He lived to see in these kingdoms only,
about three hundred Itinerant
and one thousand Local Preachers,
raised up from the midst of his own people,
and eighty thousand persons in the Societies under his care.
His name will be ever held in grateful remembrance,
by all who rejoice in the universal spread
of the Gospel of Christ.

SOLI DEO GLORIA.

CHAPTER V.

FROM BRADFORD BEING CONSTITUTED A BRANCH OF THE HALIFAX DISTRICT TO THE ERECTION, IN 1825, OF THE EASTBROOK CHAPEL.

1791—1825.

Halifax one of the newly formed Districts—Chapel erected at Farnley—Formation of the first Female Class in Bradford—Extraordinary Revival of the Work of God in 1806—Messrs. Blackburn and Whitaker noticed—Establishment of the first Methodist Sunday-School in Bradford—Chapel built at Low-Moor—Letter from Conference to the Bradford Circuit—Erection of the Chapel in Kirkgate—Messrs. Gamble, Cooper, and Simpson noticed—Pudsey and Farnley attached to the Bramley Circuit—Mr. John Rouse noticed—Formation at Leeds of the first Methodist Missionary Society—Similar Societies instituted at Halifax and Bradford—Rev. Benjamin Clough noticed—Bradford Juvenile Missionary Society formed—Woodhouse-Grove a Branch of the Bradford Circuit—Benevolent Society instituted—Erection of Chapel, School, and Preacher's House at Horton—Rev. Messrs. Entwistle and Stoner stationed in the Bradford Circuit—extensive Revival—Dudley-Hill and Bradford Moor Chapels built—Erection of School-Street and Abbey-Schools—Eastbrook Chapel erected.

To fill up the chasm occasioned by the removal of their patriarchal head, was doubtless the most important and urgent business presented to the Conference on its assembling in 1791. After electing as their President, the Rev. William Thompson, they proceeded to the division of the kingdom into districts.

“What regulations,” they inquire, “are necessary for the preservation of our whole economy, as the Rev. Mr. Wesley left it?”

"Answer, Let the three kingdoms be divided into Districts: England into nineteen districts, Scotland into two, and Ireland into six."

Of the nineteen English districts, Halifax, in conjunction with the Colne, Keighley, Bradford, and Huddersfield circuits, was appointed one. Why, Halifax, rather than Bradford, the older Methodist station, was placed at the head of the newly-formed district, does not appear;* whilst, as little evidence is now forthcoming, that the advancement of Ephraim became, in this instance, any cause of envy to the tribe of Judah.

The ecclesiastical arrangement above referred to, clearly marks the legislative wisdom of the Conference when assembled in 1791. Up to that period, or nearly so, during the interval of its annual sittings, Mr. Wesley had exercised the sole paternal superintendence of the Methodist connexion: all matters in dispute were referred to his decision; in every case of emergency, his judgment was solicited. To supply, to a certain extent, the lack thus occasioned by his death, District meetings, as courts of surveillance and appeal, were wisely instituted. These are, in fact, Committees of the Conference, exercising over certain localities a limited jurisdiction, and transacting various disciplinary and financial matters, preparatory to, and tending greatly, to facilitate the proceedings of the Conference in its annual assembly.

In 1792, Messrs. Entwistle and Grant were appointed to the Bradford circuit. By a subsequent, unofficial arrangement however, Mr. Entwistle laboured during the year in Leeds, and Mr. Parson Greenwood, appointed

* Unless, perhaps, its central relation to the other places be assigned.

by Conference to the Leeds circuit, took the superintendence of this. The three brethren stationed in Leeds, were all advanced in years; in consequence of which, an affectionate remonstrance was transmitted to the Conference, but arriving too late, Mr. Pawson, in conjunction with several senior preachers, sanctioned the change as above stated.

Mr. Greenwood appears to have been the first preacher, who for three successive years laboured in the Bradford circuit. The work of God under his superintendence prospered greatly; so much so, that at the expiration of his sojourn here, an increase of two hundred and sixty members is reported.

During the agitations of the Connexion from 1794 to 1797, when Alexander Kilham, who, in 1796, had been expelled by a unanimous vote of the Conference, became the founder of the "New Connexion," the Bradford societies were happily preserved in peace. For several successive years, at this stormy period, a gradual increase of members is reported. The sacramental disputes affected them not; whilst satisfied with the doctrines and discipline of Methodism, they appear to have been agreed, "not to mend our rules, but to keep them for conscience sake."

In 1797, the first Methodist chapel erected in Farnley was opened by Mr. Benson, who preached there on Whit-Monday, from Luke xv. 10. For the erection of this humble sanctuary, as well as the more commodious and elegant structure, which in 1827 was erected on its site, Methodism at Farnley is mainly indebted to the zeal and liberality of the late Mr. Pawson, who, in connexion with the venerable Thomas Ripley, an aged member and leader of the Farnley Society, may be regarded as the chief promoter of the two.

In 1802, during the first appointment of the writer's honoured Father to the Bradford circuit, the formation of the first female class in this immediate neighbourhood took place. The names* of the members as a matter of curiosity, are given below. The class itself, with an occasional change of leader, has continued to the present day; and is now, under the judicious and indefatigable attentions of Mrs. Holmes, a flourishing section of the town society.

Towards the close of 1805, under the ministration of the Rev. Messrs Suter and Wilson, Bradford was favoured with one of those extraordinary visitations, which have occasionally marked the progress of our Zion. The ordinary vouchsafement of the Holy Spirit, as evidenced in the edification of believers, and the continuous extension of the Saviour's kingdom, we are indeed, at all times, authorized to expect: yet times and seasons such as the one here alluded to, can only be referred to the good pleasure of Him, who in the operations of his Spirit, " divideth" to the churches, " severally as he will."

A more than ordinary influence had for some time accompanied the ministration of the word, and the varied means of grace; so that the societies generally, "building up" themselves on their "most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost," and keeping themselves "in the love of God," were "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life;" when, during the services of the September quarterly watch-night, after several had engaged in exhortation and prayer, pleasing indication was given that the Head

* Ann Stamp, *Leader*, Ann Mawson, Ann Blackburn, Margaret Fearnside, Hannah Greenwood, Alice Shepherd, Mary Fawcett Alice Green, Mary Wood, Sarah Merril, Catherine Stabler, Ann Warburton, Margaret M'Fearn, Sarah Smith, Mary Wilkinson. Of this little company only two are now living.

of the church, "the Giver of all grace," was about to pour

" All the Spirit of his love."

Several were that evening in distress for their sins; and whilst one was pleading with God in immediate reference to one of the number,—“Lord! if this man had on his conscience the sins of the whole world, one drop of thy blood would wash them all away!” a member of society, who 'til that moment had been a stranger to the “sense of sin forgiven,” was happily enabled to “trust” in Christ, and became the witness of his power to save. So extensively, from that hour, was the flame of heavenly influence diffused, that for several months there was scarcely a sermon preached, or any religious service held, under which some were not convinced of sin, or given to rejoice in God. The doors of the Octagon chapel, for ten or twelve weeks, were scarcely ever closed either by day or night; one party of worshippers frequently waiting *without*, 'til those *within* had fulfilled the appointed hour of service. The preaching of the word, during that period, was of necessity, almost laid aside; no sooner, in many instances, was the text announced, than the cries of persons in distress, so interrupted the preacher, that the service of the word was at once exchanged for one of general and earnest intercession. Two zealous men, of established piety, were for some time supported by the Society, in order that they might be constantly employed in exhorting, or praying with those who were in distress, or in holding meetings for prayer in the immediate neighbourhood. In several instances too, lovefeasts were held in the open air, no chapel being sufficiently large to accommodate the crowds who attended from the adjoining circuits.

Numbers of young people were, at this period,

brought under a concern for salvation; more than three hundred of whom were met in class, by Messrs. Blackburn* and Whitaker, who, in this important work, were usefully employed every evening of the week. This gracious work was not however limited to the young, but embraced persons of well nigh every age and station in life. Upwards of nine hundred individuals received during the year notes of admission on trial into the Society; and at the Conference of 1806, a net increase of five hundred and twenty members was reported.

Much there doubtless was, in this religious movement, which some might deem indecorous; great and extensive good was however accomplished, and to this day, the whole stands forth as one of the most extraordinary and salutary visitations ever witnessed in the Bradford circuit.†

Early in the year 1808, under the superintendence of the late Rev. John Gaultier, the first Sabbath School in connection with Methodism in Bradford, was established. In an address “to the inhabitants of Bradford and its neighbourhood,” published shortly after its formation, it is stated, “there are already more than

* These good men were amongst the most active lay-agents in this revival of the work of God. Mr. Blackburn subsequently held for many years the offices of Class-Leader and Circuit-Steward in the Bradford circuit. On a tablet, erected to his memory in Kirkgate chapel, it is stated, that “for more than half a century, he maintained a cordial attachment to the doctrines, discipline, and ministry of the Wesleyan Methodists.” He died June 30, 1837, $\text{\textit{A\textit{e}}}.$ 65. Mr. Whitaker, his then coadjutor, has from that period, maintained an honourable position in the church of God, and is now the oldest leader and local preacher in the Bradford West Circuit.

† For many of the facts above stated, I am indebted to the kindness of the Rev. Stephen Wilson, one of the principal agents in this gracious work, and now as a Supernumerary Preacher, resident in the Bradford West Circuit.

one hundred and sixty teachers, who look for their reward at the 'resurrection of the just;' upwards of eight hundred and fifty scholars, superintended by persons, whose only remuneration is the gratification of seeing the children advance in knowledge and virtue." The officers of the Institution there announced were,— Mr. Gaulter, president; Mr. Dufton, treasurer; Messrs. Blackburn and Cryer, secretaries; who, together with twenty-four others, constituted the committee. The school was instituted on the eleventh of February, and for a short time was held in the Octagon chapel. The rapid increase of scholars rendering more convenient premises necessary, the committee thankfully embraced the offer of an upper room in Mr. Fawcett's factory, Union-street, where, for several years, the school was held rent-free. Afterwards a large room in Fawcett's-Row was taken by the committee, in which, till the erection of the spacious building in School-street, the children were regularly taught.

On Easter Monday, this year, the foundation stone of a new and commodious chapel at Low-Moor, was laid by Mr. Gaulter. The building is a spacious, well built structure, and was methodistically vested in the following persons, as trustees;—James Parkinson, George Hoyle, Richard Slater, James Worsnop, Abraham Worsnop, Thomas Worsnop, Joseph Tordoff, Samuel Clough, John White, John Garforth, Joseph Sugden, George Sugden, William Farrar, John Aked, John Blackburn, and Joseph Ackroyd. The chapel was opened on Easter Sunday,* 1809; Messrs. Gaulter,

* Previous to this, the services of Methodism, were for a season, held in the house of George Hoyle, an eminently pious and devoted man, of whom, an interesting memoir is given in the Wesleyan Magazine for 1824; and afterwards, by permission of the Low-Moor Company, in the "Old Laith," fitted up by the Society as a place of worship, and used by them as such, from 1798, to the period above mentioned.

Collins, and Gibbons, officiating on the occasion.

The successful efforts made by the society and trustees, at Low-Moor, in liquidation of the debt, which for many years rendered their chapel premises a burden, pleasingly evince how much may be accomplished, when men are resolved, with God's blessing, to help themselves. By advancing small sums of money to the trustees, without interest;—by weekly and monthly contributions;—by aiding, *according to their ability*, the anniversary collections on behalf of the chapel;—by an annual “tea,” gratuitously provided, the proceeds of which were devoted to the same purpose, they succeeded in the course of ten years, in reducing the debt upon the chapel, from £1000 to £500.

By the generosity of the “Low-Moor Company,” a spacious burial ground has lately been added to the chapel premises. The plot is tastefully laid out; whilst its refreshing verdure, like an oasis in the desert, furnishes a striking contrast to the unsightly mounds of coal-pit refuse, which on every side surround.

At the Conference of 1809, Bradford received the following not-to-be-misunderstood communication, from the legislative head of the body, then assembled in Manchester:—

“TO THE STEWARDS AND LEADERS OF THE SOCIETIES OF THE TOWN AND CIRCUIT OF BRADFORD, YORKSHIRE.

Manchester, August, 16th, 1809.

DEAR BRETHREN,

The necessities of the Connexion, and the insufficiency of the Contingent Fund, to meet the demands upon it, oblige us to call on you to exert yourselves, in order to raise on the average of all your societies, at least, one penny per week, and one shilling per quarter for each member, and thus to defray your own expenses.

Signed on behalf of the Conference,

THOMAS TAYLOR, PRESIDENT,
JOSEPH BENSON, SECRETARY.

For nine or ten years, the Bradford circuit had received an annual grant from the Contingent Fund,* in liquidation of its ordinary deficiencies. Its contributions to that Fund, during this period, amount to £321. 8s. 9d: the sums allotted for the purpose above stated, were £207. 17s. 2d. The accustomed grant, as intimated in the Conferential epistle, was this year withdrawn, and with but one exception, has not since that period been renewed. The advice, then given, we regret to state, has only been in part observed: the circuit has indeed, contrived to "defray its own expenses," yet were the rule of Methodism here referred to, carried out in this and other manufacturing places, the number of preachers might be considerably increased, and the interests of Methodism, in these densely populated districts, proportionally advanced.

About this period, the abandonment of the Octagon, and the erection of a large and commodious chapel in the centre of the town were seriously contemplated. Various circumstances seemed to render a step of this kind necessary; the former "house," though endeared by many truly Wesleyan associations, was scarcely deemed safe for worship;—the population of the town had considerably increased;—the society in Bradford, had of late years, received a large accession of members, so that additional sanctuary accommodation was loudly called for. After much deliberation, and in respectful disregard of the strong remonstrances of many country friends, who considered the Octagon, the chapel of *the circuit*, as well as of the town, a desirable estate, the property of Mr. Abraham Gibson, comprising several houses, warehouses, gardens, &c. situate in the higher part of Kirkgate, was forthwith purchased, and by

* Formed by the "yearly collection" in the classes in March, and an annual appeal to the congregations in July.

Deed of Release, bearing date Jan. 12, 1811, conveyed to the following individuals as trustees ;—

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| George Mawson..... | Iron-Founder..... | Bradford. |
| John Key..... | Druggist | do. |
| John Aked..... | Raff Merchant..... | do. |
| Richard Fawcett | Merchant..... | Horton. |
| William Dufton..... | Woolstapler..... | do. |
| James Gamble..... | Linen Draper..... | Bradford. |
| John Greenwood..... | Grocer..... | do. |
| James Sharp | Cotton Manufacturer..... | do. |
| Joseph Ackroyd..... | Grocer..... | do. |
| John Smith..... | Cotton Manufacturer..... | do. |
| Joshua Jennings..... | Corn Miller..... | do. |
| John Blackburn..... | Accountant..... | do. |
| William Whitaker... | Woolsorter..... | do. |
| Watson Cryer..... | Linen-Draper..... | do. |
| John Sutcliffe..... | Cotton Spinner..... | Halifax. |
| Thomas Pawson..... | Merchant..... | Farnley. |

The accompanying "Deed of Declaration of Trusts," omitting the names, William Dufton, Watson Cryer, John Sutcliffe, bears date, Feb. 23, 1813

* In 1837, the number of the original trustees, having been by death or otherwise, considerably reduced, a renewal of the Trust Deed took place; when, in addition to Messrs. Fawcett, Gamble, Sharp, and Whitaker, the only-then-surviving trustees, the following were appointed in co-trustee-ship with them :—

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| Abraham Brumfit..... | Woollen-Draper..... | Bradford. |
| Thomas Holmes..... | Draper..... | do. |
| Samuel Selby..... | Woolstapler..... | do. |
| Thomas Haigh..... | Schoolmaster..... | do. |
| James Bottomley..... | Shopkeeper..... | do. |
| Henry Simpson..... | Draper..... | do. |
| John C. Cooper..... | Surgeon..... | do. |
| George Parkinson..... | Draper..... | do. |
| H. W. Blackburn..... | Woolstapler | do. |

Of these, Messrs Gamble, Cooper, and Simpson, have already been removed by death. Mr. Gamble, was one of the most active promoters of the newly erected chapel, and for many years manifested a lively interest in its welfare. He continued to a "good old age," a member of the methodist society, and in the month of August, 1839, was "gathered to his fathers."

The chapel, a noble and commanding structure, and capable of seating 1400 hearers, was opened on Sunday May 12th, 1811, by the Rev. Messrs. Atmore and Newton; the former of whom preached in the morning at ten, the latter in the afternoon and evening. Connected with the chapel, are two large commodious houses, which for several years were used as residences for the preachers;—a spacious vestry, with class-rooms above; and also, an extensive burial ground, in which the remains of nearly two thousand of our fellow immortals, silently await the “resurrection of the just and the unjust.”

For the purchase of the original premises, £2940. were given. Several portions of the property, not needed by the trustees, were quickly disposed of, so that the actual cost of chapel, land, and houses, may be correctly estimated in round numbers, at £9000. Deducting from this sum, £3000 raised by subscriptions, &c. together with the sale of the Octagon estate, we have £6000. left as the pecuniary liability of the Kirkgate trustees of 1811.

At the period of its erection, the Kirkgate chapel must have been one of the largest structures of the kind, throughout the whole connexion. The project, though perhaps appearing to some almost chimerical, was yet

Mr. Cooper died Nov. 25. 1838. His professional attainments, and the undeviating integrity of his deportment, commanded universal respect and esteem. In his last illness, he endured much weakness and suffering, but retained to the close of life, an unshaken confidence in the mercy of God through Christ.

Of Mr. Simpson, it may be lamentingly recorded, that “his sun went down while it was yet day.” In the prime of life,—sustaining with credit many important offices in the church of Christ,—exemplifying in his family, and in the world, the Christian character, he was suddenly called to suffer, droop, and die.

“His God sustained him in the final hour,
His final hour brought glory unto God.”

He entered into rest Jan. 24th, 1841.

noble and praiseworthy, and reflects much honour on those excellent men who devised and perfected the scheme. A salutary impulse was thereby given to the energies of the society at large; Methodism in Bradford assumed a new, a more commanding position, and from that day to the present, has under the accompanying blessing of God, progressively advanced. Not fewer than six Wesleyan congregations in Bradford and its vicinity, may be regarded as off-shoots from the one in Kirkgate.*

At the Conference of 1811, Bramley was separated from Leeds, and constituted the head of a distinct circuit; at which period, the Pudsey and Farnley societies,—long connected with Bradford, were apportioned as branches of the newly-formed circuit. To this circumstance, the decrease of one hundred and fifty members in the Bradford circuit, as reported in the “Minutes” of the following year, must be referred.

In the autumn of 1813, a Benevolent or Strangers’ Friend Society was instituted for the town and neighbourhood of Bradford, and from that period to the present has been in active and beneficial operation.

* Few societies have been visited with such successive strokes of bereavement, as that connected with the Kirkgate chapel. Within four short years, not less than six of its most influential and useful members,—“pillars” of our Israel, have been taken away by death. Of these, the late Mr. John Rouse was one; who whilst “devising liberal things,” and exciting the expectation of extended usefulness, was suddenly removed to the “church of the first-born” in heaven. His career as a Wesleyan Methodist, was marked by pious solicitude for the spiritual interests of his relatives, and by an anxious concern for the instruction and welfare of the children of the poor; for whom he provided a week-day and two Sabbath-schools. He exchanged mortality for life, March 12, 1838. His attachment to Methodism was manifested by a bequest to *each* of the Kirkgate and Eastbrook trusts of the princely sum of £200.; which sum, together with £50. promised towards the erection of the Preachers’ Houses, was generously paid duty free.

The sole object of this society is the relief of the sick and destitute poor; want and wretchedness constituting the only claim to help from its funds. In an unostentatious manner, upwards of £100. are distributed by the visitors in weekly sums, from year to year; many cases of urgent distress are thus relieved, and the sad amount of human misery lessened. The range of this society, notwithstanding the formation of the Bradford West and East circuits, still embraces the whole of the town and its vicinity.

In the important movement which this year took place, in favour of the extension of Wesleyan Missions, Bradford was one of the first to participate. Dr. Coke, then in his sixty-seventh year, having with considerable difficulty obtained the consent of Conference, to establish Missions* in the island of Ceylon, and in Java, the *onus* of raising the necessary supplies devolved a serious responsibility on the connexion† at large. The plan of forming Missionary

* Of the six missionaries, who accompanied the Doctor on this important errand, one, the Rev. Benjamin Clough, was a native of Bradford. The long continued and successful efforts of this devoted missionary;—his services as a translator of the Holy Scriptures into the dialects of India,—services honourably acknowledged by the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society;—his compilation of the first Singhalese Dictionary ever published,—thus facilitating greatly the efforts of all subsequent labourers in that interesting section of the mission field, reflect on him, and on his native town, a lasting honour.

† Up to this period, the Wesleyan Missions had been supported, partly by an annual collection, made throughout the connexion on their behalf, but principally by the personal exertions of the Doctor himself, who from their first establishment, had been unwearied in his endeavours to raise money for this end.

The first general collection on behalf of Wesleyan Missions, was appointed by conference in 1793. No further appeal of this kind was made 'til three years subsequent; when a general collection was ordered to be made "in every town of England, where Dr. Coke had not made application within six months before the meeting of Conference;" after which the appeal was annually made.

societies was happily adopted, and soon became general. At Leeds, on Wednesday, October 6th, 1813, the formation of the "Methodist Missionary Society for the Leeds District,"—the first of the kind in Methodism, took place: *nineteen* resolutions were successively passed, being moved and seconded by not less than *five and thirty* speakers! On the tenth of November following, a similar meeting was held at Halifax, Richard Fawcett, Esq., of Bradford, occupying the chair; when the Auxiliary Society of the Halifax District was formed. John Ashworth, Esq., of Halifax, was appointed treasurer of the newly established society; and the Rev. Messrs. Reece, Atmore, and Braithwaite, with T. S. Swale, Esq., of Halifax, requested to act as Secretaries for the year then ensuing.

On Friday, Nov. 26, 1813, the members* of the district-committee resident in Bradford, met for "the purpose of nominating a local committee, to act for the town and neighbourhood of Bradford." The friends then named, were convened by the Rev. Richard Reece, on the third of the following month, when a "Branch Missionary Society" for the Bradford circuit was at once and heartily established; Mr. James Gamble being appointed the circuit treasurer, and Messrs. A. Brumfit and Broadbent, secretaries for the year ensuing. The town and its vicinity were divided into seventeen districts, and *fifty-nine* collectors appointed to canvass, and collect subscriptions within the same. The Cornish motto,—"one and all," seems indeed to have been literally adopted.

The year following, on Wednesday, May 25, 1814, the anniversary of the "Auxiliary Missionary Society

* Messrs. Fawcett, Key, Mawson, Aked, Cryer, Gamble, Sharp, Milnes and Brumfit.

for the Halifax District," was held in the Kirkgate chapel, Bradford; Richard Fawcett, Esq., in the chair. The platform-era had not then commenced: yet, in this instance, the chairman and speakers found an excellent substitute in the spacious orchestra behind the pulpit. The report,—an interesting and well-written document, was drawn up and read by the Rev. Richard Reece, one of the district secretaries, and Superintendent of the Bradford circuit.

Nearly three years from this period, on Monday, the 22d of April, 1816, the Bradford Juvenile Branch Missionary Society was formed, and soon became an efficient and important ally. The persevering zeal and energy which for upwards of quarter of a century have characterized the efforts of this interesting "Branch," reflect the highest credit on the junior members of Methodism, both in the West and East divisions of the town.

In the "Minutes" of 1812, Woodhouse-Grove,—opened Jan. 8th of this year, as a second "Wesleyan Academy," for the education of the sons of Methodist Preachers,—appears as a branch of the Bradford circuit. Several places in the vicinity of the Grove, were however, the following year taken from Bradford, and allotted to Woodhouse-Grove, as the head of a newly constituted circuit: amongst these were Eccleshill, Idle, Undercliffe, &c. Hence the decrease of more than two hundred members, as reported in the Minutes of 1814, in reference to the Bradford circuit.

In 1814, the "old school" at Great-Horton, becoming far too small to contain the increasing society and congregation there, a new and spacious chapel, holding about five hundred persons, was this year erected. The chapel,—such was the desire then mani-

fested to hear the word, was occupied by the congregation some months before its actual completion ; when on Easter Tuesday, 1815, its *formal* opening took place ; the Reverend Messrs. R. Newton and Everett preaching on the occasion.

The Deed bears date, May 1, 1815, and is signed by the following persons as trustees ;—Nathaniel Dracup, John Ramsden, Jonas Milnes, Eli Suddards, Joseph Wilkinson, Roger Milnes, John Suddards, John Fawcett, James* Brooksbank, Thomas Stocks, William Holdsworth, William Nettleton, John Mason, George Dracup, Samuel Bentley, William Lee, and Thomas Ramsden. Some misunderstanding as to the “Conference plan” for the settlement of chapels, is given as the reason why no *earlier* date is affixed to the deed.

In 1820, a commodious school-room was erected on the chapel premises, at a cost of £300. This was subsequently enlarged, and now presents a noble building, embracing an area of nearly twenty yards by nine, and capable of accommodating upwards of four hundred scholars.

In 1830, the land originally on lease, and subject to an annual rent of £16., was converted into freehold, at an additional expense of £300. on which occasion the trust-deed of the whole premises was renewed. The surviving members of the former trust, were, Roger Milnes, George Dracup, John Fawcett, James Brooksbank, William Lee, and Thomas Ramsden : to whom were added, Samuel White, Joseph Ramsden, Samuel Parker, Thomas Myers, Robert King, John Hodgson, William Sheppard, John Shepherd, David Stephenson, Luke Greenwood, Benj. Shackleton, and Edward Dracup. The deed bears date, Nov. 17, 1830.

* This good man, now on the verge of the eternal world, is perhaps the oldest chapel keeper in the neighbourhood ; having been a “door keeper in the house of his God,” upwards of five and forty years.

In 1834, the chapel premises were rendered still more complete by the erection of a neat, commodious preacher's house, in the immediate vicinity. This ministerial residence, though small, is yet delightfully situated; commanding one of the finest and most extensive prospects in the West of Yorkshire. Its first occupant was the Rev. Benjamin Pearce. Few country villages perhaps throughout the connexion, present trust-premises so methodistically complete and extensive, as those of Great-Horton. Annexed to the chapel,* with its preacher's residence, school, and vestry, is an extensive burial-ground; the whole comprising an area of upwards of 3500 square yards. In the numerous difficulties with which the trustees have had to contend, and in their vigilant attention to the interests of this establishment, they have truly earned the character of faithful men. From the erection of the chapel in 1814, to the present day, an out-lay of upwards of £3550. has been incurred.

On the erection of the Church Sunday-School at Horton in 1808, under the auspices of the late Rev. John Crosse, the Sabbath School, which for many years had been held by the Methodists in their ancient school and preaching-room, was transferred to the Church, and as a methodist school, was not revived 'til twelve years after. But for this circumstance, the Horton Sunday-school might now have claimed the precedence of well-nigh every other in the West-Riding; several persons being still living, who were Sabbath-scholars in the old school nearly sixty years ago. Amongst these, are Thomas Peel, George Dracup, and Ann Shuttleworth.

* To give increased chapel accommodation to the Sunday scholars, as well as to provide for the more becoming celebration of the Sacraments of our holy religion, a neat recess with orchestra above, is now in the course of erection behind the pulpit.

Little from this period, beyond the ordinary routine of circuit-affairs, took place in Bradford, 'til the appointment in 1819, of the Rev. Messrs. Turton and Stoner, and in the two succeeding years of Messrs. Entwistle and Stoner, to the Bradford circuit; when this section of the church again appeared as "a field which God delights to bless." The ministrations of these excellent and "able ministers of the New Testament," were eminently owned of God; numbers were convinced of sin, and brought unto "a knowledge of the truth;" believers were edified, and many "made perfect in love;" so that at the Conference of 1822, a *net* increase of six hundred and forty members is reported. The ministry of the loved and lamented David Stoner, was especially instrumental in the awakening of sinners, and in rousing all classes of our Zion to increased activity and holy zeal; whilst under the judicious, pastoral attentions of the amiable and Rev. Joseph Entwistle,—then, and yet honourably sustaining the well-earned designation of "Father" in our Israel, this gracious movement received a stability and permanency, which have but seldom characterized similar visitations. So far indeed was this the case, that within three or four years from the removal of these honoured men to other stations, in addition to the chapel erected in the Eastbrook division of the town, the erection of chapels at Dudley-Hill, and Bradford-Moor, and Farsley were rendered necessary.

From the testimony of one,* who enjoyed, and was capable of appreciating the friendship of this devoted man, it appears that Mr. Stoner reluctantly assented to the wishes of the Bradford friends, to labour among them. Hence the observation in his diary of Sept. 9, 1819, "I cannot be satisfied that my call to Bradford is of God, until I hear of some awakenings;" yet his

* Mr. Samuel Selby, of Bradford.

residence in Bradford became the scene not only of peculiar and extensive usefulness to others, but to himself of rapid, well-established progress in divine attainments. After the perusal of Mr. Bramwell's life, in which he represents himself as "humbled, quickened, ashamed, and encouraged," Mr. Stoner was enabled in the exercise of wrestling mighty prayer, "to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus."* "A change," observes the friend above referred to, "evidently came over him. His style in the pulpit was less rhetorical, less laboured. He sought out words that burned. He aimed at, and with thrilling effect reached the heart." His prayer, that he might never preach a useless sermon, was fully answered: many were "the slain of the Lord."

In no period of Mr. Stoner's career were his labours so remarkably owned of God, as during his sojourn in the Bradford circuit; in no appointment does he appear to have felt so much *at home*. "God gave me," observes he, "the hearts of the people in a remarkable degree. It is not to be described how they bore with me, and loved me;—nor the affection I felt for them. I never thought my contracted, selfish, stubborn disposition capable of such feelings as I have had towards the Bradford Societies. To leave them, was like rending my heart asunder." So strongly were these feelings of attachment reciprocated by the Bradford societies and congregations, that "for a long time after his departure, his name could not be publicly mentioned without a powerful and visible emotion."

Mr. Stoner subsequently laboured in the Birstal and York circuits. At the Conference of 1826, he was appointed to Liverpool, but was scarcely settled in his

* See the deeply interesting statements placed on record in the "Memoirs" of this distinguished minister, compiled by Messrs. Hannah and Dawson.

new sphere of labour, when on the 23rd of October, 1826, he triumphantly exchanged mortality for life. Almost his last words were, "Lord, save sinners! Save them by thousands, Lord! Subdue them! Conquer them!"

A tablet, bearing the following inscription, is erected to his memory in the Kirkgate chapel, Bradford :—

This tablet is erected in grateful remembrance

OF THE REV. DAVID STONER,

Who died in Liverpool, October 23rd, 1826,
Aged 32 years.

In the early death of this eminent servant of Christ,

The church has to lament the loss of one
Of her most faithful and laborious ministers.

Though reserved in his manners,

He was firm and cordial in his friendships;
And his personal virtues, and christian character

Were above all praise.

His ministry was distinguished

By plainness, intelligence, and power.

His awakening appeals, his inflexible fidelity,

His copious eloquence,

And his talented discourses which he delivered

In the course of the three years he was stationed in this circuit,

Will long dwell

Upon the delighted recollections of thousands,

Who were privileged with hearing

His apostolical addresses.

An extraordinary number of souls will be the fruit of his labours,

Who will hail their beloved pastor

With transporting joy, on the morning of the resurrection.

His last words

Were a just illustration of the spirit he breathed

Through the whole of his ministerial career,

"LORD, SAVE SINNERS!"

Visitations such as the one referred to, have too frequently been followed by an almost proportionate declension; the tide of religious fervour has in many

instances suddenly ceased to flow. This, we are happy to state, was not the case in Bradford: many individual cases there doubtless were, in which conviction was unhappily stifled, and God and his church forsaken, yet the gracious work steadily progressed; so that, at the Conference of 1823, under the ministrations of the Rev. Messrs. Entwistle, Rigg, and Tindall, a further increase of 250 members is reported.

In the spring of this year, March 31, 1823, the chapel* recently erected at Dudley-Hill, was opened by the Rev. Messrs. Stoner and A. E. Farrar. Sticker Lane, in the immediate neighbourhood, was at a very early period the scene of Mr. Wesley's labours: here also, one of the earliest societies in the Bradford circuit was formed. (See pages 16 and 43.) Till the erection in 1816, of the adjoining Sunday-School, the services of Methodism were held in the houses of its members. Thus, step by step,—from the cottage to the school-room,—from the school-room to the chapel, has the Dudley-Hill society advanced; and with Bradford-Moor, is at length one of the principal societies of the Bradford East circuit.

Methodism in Bradford-Moor is of more recent date. Little more than forty years ago, prayer-meetings were first established at Laister-Dyke: the formation of one or two classes quickly followed, with the establishment of preaching every Sabbath evening, and the quarterly visitation of the Travelling Preachers; 'til on the 12th of April, 1823, the foundation of a new and spacious

* This neat, commodious sanctuary, underwent in 1839, considerable enlargement, and with the spacious burial ground annexed, is vested in the following persons as trustees:—Jonas Milnes, John Cheesborough, William Whitaker, Thomas Holmes, David Dalby, Thomas Haigh, George Shepherd, Isaac Ellis, Thomas Owrid, James Butler, James Ludlam, Isaac Wells, Joseph Tordoff.

chapel on the Moor was laid ; thus giving to the society the prospect at once of extension and permanency. The chapel was opened on the 21st of November the same year, by the Rev. Messrs. Newton and Farrar. In 1833, a spacious School-room, nearly twelve yards square, was erected on the chapel premises ; and in the “centenary year,” the chapel* itself was enlarged, so as to give accommodation to nearly 700 hearers.

The year 1823 was further marked by the erection of a spacious Sabbath-school in School-street, Bradford ; to which, when completed, the Sunday-school, which for several years had been held in Fawcett’s-Row, was removed. The year following, a similar building was erected in the Abbey district of the town,—a neighbourhood densely populated, which till then had been wholly destitute of Sabbath-school or chapel. Both these rooms have cottages underneath.

Towards the close of the same year also, such was the demand for sittings in the Kirkgate chapel, which the Trustees were unable to meet, that the erection of a second and yet larger sanctuary in the town of Bradford, was at length determined. An eligible plot of land, situate at the foot of the Leeds road, was purchased of Charles Harris, Esq., and measures taken to secure the eventual accomplishment of the important project. The chapel,—a spacious and commodious structure, “approaching to the gothic in its style of

* Connected with the chapel is an extensive burial ground, which with the land attached to it in 1839, covers an area of nearly 3000 square yards. The land is held on lease, at a yearly rent, for 999 years, of forty shillings, and with the chapel, school, and vestry, is vested in the following trustees;—John Frankland, John Spencer, William Hainsworth, Samuel Milner, John Blackburn, George Corless, John Cheesborough, John Taylor, Thomas Holmes, William Mortimer, and Jonas Milnes.

architecture," and capable of accommodating 1500 hearers, was not however completed* till nearly two years after; when, on Friday, September 2, 1825, and on the following Sabbath, the opening services were conducted by Dr. Adam Clarke, in conjunction with the Rev. Messrs. Jabez Bunting, Atherton, Lessey, and Stoner, and Mr. William Dawson. A correspondent of the Wesleyan Magazine, observes on that occasion,—“the interest excited by the opening of the Eastbrook chapel was considerably increased by the desire of all ranks to see and hear our esteemed friend, Dr. Clarke, who had never before preached in Bradford, or its immediate vicinity. The concourse of persons from all parts of the surrounding country was exceedingly great, especially on Sunday, when the chapels were crowded to excess, and hundreds of those who assembled were disappointed of hearing the preachers in the chapels. This was however partially remedied by Mr. Dawson preaching in the burial-ground of the old chapel in the forenoon, and the Rev. Thomas Walker, near the Eastbrook chapel in the afternoon.” The amount of the collections was £580.

The trust premises were subsequently extended by the purchase of a large and desirable plot of land, as an additional burial-ground in connection with the chapel; and by the erection in 1836, of two excellent, commodious houses in the immediate vicinity, as residences for the preachers of the Bradford East circuit;

* The Trust Deed bearing date August 31, 1824, is signed by the following persons as Trustees;—John Aked, Richard Fawcett, James Gamble, John Greenwood, James Sharp, Joseph Ackroyd, John Blackburn, William Whitaker, Jonas Milnes, John Cheeseborough, Thomas Beaumont, David Dalby, Abraham Brumfit, Thomas Holmes, John Broadbent, Samuel Rhodes, Joseph Greenwood, George Shepherd, Thomas Haigh, William H. Blackburn, and James Bottomley.

the whole of which were on the 27th of January, 1841, as one consolidated trust, vested in the following persons as trustees:—

| | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| Lodge Calvert..... | Gentleman..... | Bradford. |
| John Cheeseborough .. | Woolstapler..... | do. |
| Thomas Beaumont..... | Surgeon..... | do. |
| Wm. H. Blackburn..... | Stationer..... | do. |
| Swithin Anderton..... | Woolstapler | do. |
| Wm. Cheeseborough ... | do | do. |
| William Taylor..... | do | do. |
| James Green..... | Builder..... | do. |
| William Peel..... | Manufacturer..... | do. |
| Thos. M. Monckman.... | Tobacconist..... | do. |
| George Bingham..... | Woolstapler | do. |
| William Wyrill..... | Ironmonger..... | do. |
| William Hainsworth.... | Woolstapler | do. |
| Edward Onions..... | Iron-Founder | do. |
| Samuel Milnes..... | Overlooker..... | do. |
| James Rhodes | do..... | do. |
| William Wheelhouse... | Iron-Founder | do. |
| Joseph Whitehead..... | Coach-Builder..... | do. |
| Thomas Parkinson..... | Grocer..... | do. |
| Daniel Ross..... | Draper..... | do. |
| John Taylor... | Perfumer | do. |
| Leonard Spence..... | Butter-Factor..... | do. |
| William Smith..... | Worsted Spinner..... | do. |
| James Patchett..... | Gentleman | do. |

The renewal of the Eastbrook trust thus accomplished, had for some time,—especially since the division of the town into separate circuits,—been regarded as a step highly desirable, and calculated to promote the interests both of the chapel and circuit.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM BRADFORD BEING CONSTITUTED THE HEAD OF A DISTRICT, TO THE CLOSE OF THE FIRST CENTURY OF WESLEYAN METHODISM.

1828—39.

Circuits included in the Bradford District—Public discussion in Eastbrook Chapel, on points at issue between Protestantism and Popery—Erection of Chapel and School at Farsley—George-Street and Slackside Schools erected—Chapels built at Allerton and Clayton—Bradford Circuit divided—Places included in the Bradford West and East Circuits—Boundary line in the West and East divisions of the Town—Chapel erected at Wibsey—Opening of the Organ in Kirkgate Chapel—Erection of Chapel at White Abbey—Celebration of the Centenary of Methodism—Erection of Centenary Chapel Manchester-Road.

AT the Conference held in London, 1828, Bradford was constituted the head of a newly-formed district, having attached to it as such, the following circuits:—Keighley, Bingley and Shipley, Woodhouse-Grove, Skipton, Addingham, and Grassington. The first chairman of the district was the late Rev. John Slack, then superintendent of the Bradford circuit. This arrangement however, held good not more than seven years; when in 1835, on the adoption of measures to give increased efficiency to the Districts generally, in addition to the Manchester and Bolton, the Nottingham and Derby, &c., the Halifax and Bradford districts were also united, and have since been recognized as “the Halifax and Bradford District.”

From the completion of the Eastbrook chapel* in 1825, to the formation,—ten years subsequently,—of the Bradford West and East circuits, the erection of not less than four chapels in the country, together with the Sabbath-schools, in George-street, Park-street, and Seven-Stars, and the School-chapel at Slack-Side, gave pleasing evidence of the progress of Methodism, both as to its extension and stability.

The chapel at Farsley was opened, 1826; to which, a school-room was afterwards attached, giving accommodation to 160 scholars.

In 1830, the Sabbath-school in George-street, in the East division of the town, was built; to which, the school taught for several years in the immediate neighbourhood, was at once removed.

The chapel at Calverley was erected in 1832.

The following year witnessed the erection of the Slack-Side school,—a building designed to serve the purposes both of a school and chapel; and also the school in Park-street, in the Bradford East circuit. At Allerton the same year, a plot of land, for the erection of a chapel,

* Three years after the opening of this chapel, on Wednesday and Thursday, the 3d and 4th of December, 1828, a public discussion on the important points at issue betwixt Protestantism and Popery took place; on which occasion, it is calculated nearly 4000 persons were crowded into the chapel. The chair was ably and impartially filled by John Hardy, Esq. then Recorder of Leeds. The speakers in favour of Protestantism were the Rev. John King, Minister of Christ-Church, Hull; the Rev. W. Kearny, Rector of Nunnington; the Rev. Thomas Kingston, Vicar of St. James's Dublin; George Finch, Esq. Agent of the Protestant Reformation Society; the Rev. Dr. Steadman, and the Rev. B. Godwin, Baptist Ministers, Bradford, The defenders of Popery were the Rev. Thos. M'Macdonnell, Romish Priest of Birmingham; the Rev. J. Sharples, of Blackburn; the Rev. Daniel Hearne, of Manchester; and Patrick Spence, late a private in the 49th regiment. On the second day of the discussion, the Romish Priests, abruptly leaving the meeting, gave up the contest. The above referred to discussion, originated in the interruption of the meeting of the Bradford Auxiliary Bible Society, a few weeks previous, by Mr. Maddocks, the Romish Priest then resident in Bradford.

with burial-ground adjoining, was by consent of the Freeholders, enclosed from "the waste." The chapel was opened in the course of the year, and in the benefit conferred upon the society and neighbourhood, has fully justified the efforts of its promoters.

The chapel at Clayton, accommodating about 400 hearers, was built in 1834, at an expence of £850. The building is a commodious, well-built structure, with burial-ground annexed, and with the exception of the Baptist chapel below, is the only place of worship in the immediate neighbourhood.

At the Conference of 1835, the division of the Bradford circuit,—an important, long-contemplated measure, and not accomplished without difficulty, took place. The gradual increase of the societies,—then amounting to upwards of 3000, not only rendered the circuit as to its ecclesiastical oversight somewhat unwieldy, but imposed on the superintendent a responsibility, too onerous to be comfortably borne.

The Bradford-West circuit, with the Kirkgate chapel division of the town, embraced the following places; namely, Great-Horton, Low-Moor, Clayton-Heights, Clayton, Allerton, Wibsey, Slack-side, Bowling-Lane, Manningham, Heaton, and Woodhouse-Hill. The ministerial appointment was, Philip Garrett, Benjamin Pearce, John Hobkirk.

The Bradford-East circuit, with Eastbrook chapel as the head of its town-division, comprised Dudley-Hill, Bradford-Moor, Farsley, Calverley, Seven-Stars, Woodhall-Hills, and Bierley-Lane. The preachers appointed to the circuit were, Aaron Floyd, and Charles Cheetham.

The number of members returned at the close of the year, was,—Bradford-West, 1827; Bradford-East, 1266.

The line, separating the West and East divisions of the town, cannot perhaps be better shewn, than by the following statement. On entering the town along the Manchester-road, 'til one reaches the toll-gate,* the whole neighbourhood, both to the right and left, forms part of the territory of Bradford-West. Proceeding *from* the toll-gate to the foot of Manchester-road,—along Tyrrel-street,—and crossing the Bowling-green, pursuing one's way up Market-street to the Church-bridge,—then taking the course of the river,—a stream noted neither for its purity nor depth,—as it wends along the Shipley vale, all to the right bears the methodistic cognomen, “Bradford-East,”—all to the left, “The West.”

From the division of the Bradford circuit,† many important results have already followed:—a more efficient pastoral oversight of the several societies has been secured; the number of *official* persons being necessarily increased, has summoned into active service many whose energies would otherwise have continued dormant; a livelier interest has been felt in carrying out the several departments of methodistic enterprise;—a spirit of innocent rivalry has also been excited, and “provoking,” each the other, “to love and good works,” more perhaps has been attempted towards the extension of Wesleyan Methodism, than would have been had the two circuits continued one.

In the East circuit, for instance, since the division, in addition to the enlargement of the Dudley-Hill and Bradford-Moor chapels, and the erection of the Preachers' houses, already noticed, a spacious vestry has recently been added to the Eastbrook chapel.

* Now standing in Manchester Road, at the head of the “Old Mill-Lane,” immediately above “St. James's Street.”

† For the regulations of Conference, respecting the formation of separate circuits in the same town, see note F.

In Bradford-West, the Wibsey, Abbey, and Centenary chapels have been erected, together with two excellent and commodious houses, as residences for the preachers, delightfully situated in Manor-Row. To these might be added the enlargement of the vestry, and the erection of suitable class-rooms, in connection with the Kirkgate chapel.*

In few places, perhaps, has the gospel of the Saviour achieved more decided triumphs over vice and infidelity, and these in their most forbidding forms, than at Wibsey; a village, which 'til the introduction and spread of Methodism within its precincts, was proverbial almost for every evil word and work. In Wibsey, or its immediate vicinity, a Wesleyan society has indeed existed for nearly eighty years, yet little impression was made upon this strong hold of the enemy, 'til the erection in 1821, of a spacious Sabbath-school gave a salutary impulse to the energies of Methodism, and led to the extension of its influence. In 1836, the erection of a chapel was seriously contemplated, and though the scheme seemed almost visionary, and the difficulties which presented themselves appeared insu-

* Here too, may be noticed, the erection, in 1840, of the splendid well-toned organ, built under the direction of Dr. Camidge, by Mr. Ward, of York. This beautiful and allowedly superior instrument, presents a bold, yet chastely elegant exterior, and is enclosed in a highly polished gothic case of Spanish wood. Its front dimensions are twenty feet six inches, by ten feet seven inches deep. The opening services, on Friday, September 4th, in which the trustees were favoured with the ministerial assistance of the Rev. John McLean, and the valued help of Dr. Camidge, the celebrated organist of the York Cathedral, were deeply interesting, and must long be remembered by all who were present. The cost of the organ was £510. Towards this sum, the trustees of the chapel contributed £200; the rest was raised by general subscription; William Walker, Esq. the senior circuit-steward, and one of the most liberal supporters of Methodism in the Bradford-West circuit, generously contributing £50, and Mrs. John Rouse, £30.

perable, the project, as the result of many prayers and much pains, was at length accomplished ; the foundation being laid in August, 1837, and the chapel opened July 16, 1838. This important undertaking has in an eminent degree been owned of God ; scores of sinners having been 'awakened and converted' in Wibsey, since the opening of the chapel. To God be all the glory !

In the Abbey division of the town of Bradford, Methodism was established five and forty years ago ; when chiefly through the instrumentality of the Rev. William Leach, (who in 1799 entered the Wesleyan Itinerancy,) a class was formed ; one or two members of which are "alive at this day." The erection of the school in 1824, led, under God, to the extension of Methodism in this densely populated and spiritually necessitous neighbourhood ; when, towards the close of 1837, a triangular piece of ground fronting the Bradford and Bingley old turnpike road, and containing about 1500 square yards, was purchased of the Rev. Godfrey Wright, and a neat, commodious chapel, giving accommodation to nearly 800 hearers, forthwith erected. The chapel was opened on Friday, August 31st, and Sunday, September 2nd, by the Rev. Messrs. R. Newton, Rattenbury, E. Walker, and G. Steward. The collections with subscriptions previously given, amounted to upwards of £500.*

The year 1839,—ever memorable as completing the first hundred years of our existence as a religious society, and now still more so, for the princely sums contributed by the Wesleyan societies and congregations as

* The chapel with burial-ground annexed, is vested in the following persons as Trustees ;—Samuel Selby, Thomas Holmes, Thomas Haigh, Henry Simpson, George Parkinson, Thomas Clarkson, John Rhodes, Thomas Robinson, James Wilson, Henry W. Blackburn, John Wild, Benjamin Cusworth, John Rhodes, (Horton,) William Hill, James Rhodes, John Rowsby, and James Rhodes.

thank-offerings to Almighty God, for the benefits conferred by Wesleyan Methodism,—was regarded in Bradford as a year of holy gladness,—of grateful joy. Throughout the two circuits, “Centenary meetings,” as appointed by Conference, were held in the several chapels; when, after addresses given by the preachers, and more aged members of the society,—many of whom bore pleasing testimony to the advantages they and their families had under God, received from Methodism, “the people rejoiced,” and “offered willingly” of their substance “to the Lord.”

On Friday, Oct. 25th, public religious services, as on the Lord’s day, were held in the principal chapels, and suitable discourses delivered. On the Monday following, arrangements were made for the members of society taking tea together,—the rich making provision for the poor,—after which, meetings, which might perhaps be designated Centenary Lovefeasts, were held in the several chapels, and the proceedings closed with prayer and praise. A copy of the “Centenary Volume” was on this occasion presented to each Local Preacher in the Bradford West and East circuits.

In the Bradford-West circuit, the Centenary of Methodism was further celebrated by the erection of a chapel in the amphitheatre form in Clayton-Lane, Manchester-Road;—hence designated, “The Centenary Chapel.”* The lower part of the building is, at present, occupied as cottages, and as a Sabbath-school; yet these are so arranged, that without interfering with the gallery above, the whole may be removed, and the chapel rendered at once complete.

* The following are Trustees of the chapel,—Henry Simpson, Thomas Haigh, Henry Wardman, John Rhodes, John Holmes, Henry W. Blackburn, James Rhodes, {Thomas M. Monkman, Edward Jaram, William Firth, James Hill, and Thomas Ludlam. The chapel was opened on Friday, November 22d. and Sunday Nov. 24th, by the Rev. Messrs. Everett, and Methley.

For the erection of this much needed sanctuary, the society in this division of the town stand indebted to the zeal and indefatigable exertions of the Rev. Robert Pilter. The chapel is settled pursuant to "the Model Deed," and has already a large and flourishing Sunday school connected with it.

Having thus traced the progress of Methodism in Bradford, from the prayer-meeting held at the dungeon door in 1744, to the celebration of the first Centenary of Wesleyan Methodism in 1839, our toilsome, yet not unpleasing task must terminate. The review of ninety-five years thus intervening,—during which Methodism in Bradford and its vicinity has been so far extended as to number within its pale upwards of 3500 members,—4306 children in its Sabbath-schools, and at least 15000 of the population directly or indirectly under its influence;—in the last thirty five years of which, in the erection of chapels and schools alone, upwards of £40,000. has been risked by its members for the spiritual interests of their fellow-men;—together with the highly salutary influence exerted upon society at large, and the extension of that "kingdom" which consisteth not in "meat and drink," but in "righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost,"—must, we apprehend, in every unprejudiced mind, establish the sentiment given at the commencement of this volume,—Methodism is of God; God's especial work; the revival and extension of scriptural Christianity. May its officers and members in this section of our Israel ever prize, and ever maintain that system of Christian doctrine and godly discipline, under which in God's good providence they are placed! May the fostering care of our beloved Methodism, and its richest blessings, descend unto their children, and to their children's children, to the latest generation!

APPENDIX.

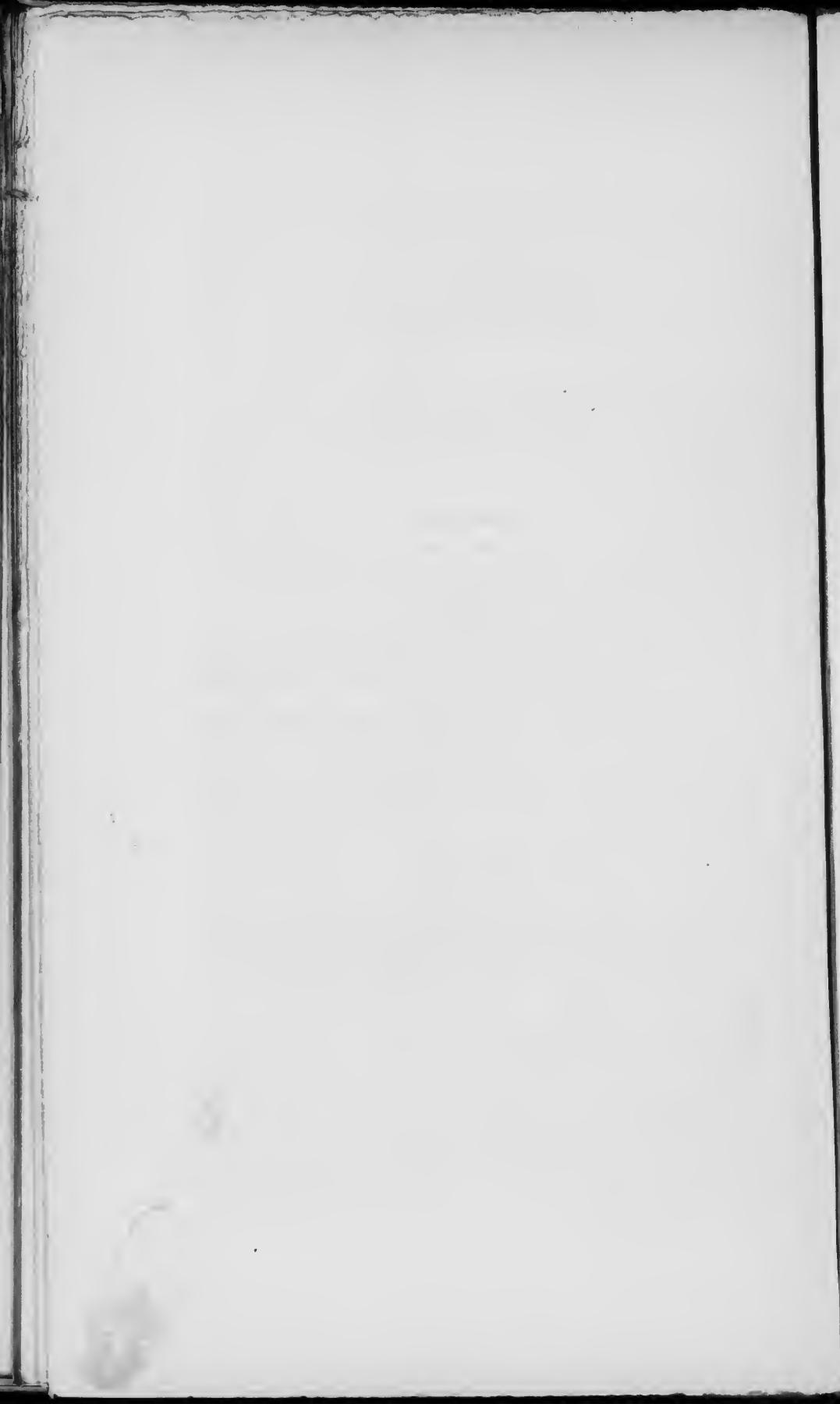
NOTES AND TABLES.

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NOTE A.

“the United Society,”—Page 2.

“The title given by the Wesleys to the societies, which were raised up by their instrumentality, describes their nature in one very important particular. They were not distinct and independent churches, but *united* societies; being all governed by the same discipline, and placed under the same pastoral care. The adoption of the connexional principle from the very first, has led to the most beneficial results. Not only has an identity of character been impressed upon all the societies, but those which have been strong in consequence of their numbers and property, have rendered seasonable help to such as were poor and feeble; and thus, the work in many places has been perpetuated, where it would otherwise have become extinct, and extended to neglected districts where the truth could not otherwise have been carried. What one or two societies could not do, has been easily accomplished by the combined exertions of the body. Its strength, under God, consists in its unity; and, were this dissolved, the methodist societies would be comparatively powerless, both at home and in the mission field. All attempts to invade the connexional principle Mr. Wesley strenuously resisted; and his sons in the gospel have hitherto wisely followed in the same course. Without adopting the principle in question, the Wesleys might have been very useful in large and populous towns, but neither they nor their successors could have carried the truth into the scattered villages and hamlets of the agricultural districts, where many hundreds of small chapels now stand, surrounded by the cottages of the poor, and frequented by thousands of devout and happy peasants.

“It is thus, that the system of Methodism adapts itself to the necessities of the humbler classes of society.”

Jackson’s Centenary of Wesleyan Methodism, Page 86-7.

NOTE B.

“we were drawn up in the street where the cross stood,”—Page 10.

The market-place at that period, was the triangular opening at the top of Kirkgate, in the centre of which stood the cross here referred to. Two sides of the opening were occupied by butchers’ shambles having slaughter-houses in the immeditate neighbourhood. The dungeon, in which this good man was so unrighteously immured, is still existent, and now forms the lower cellars, two stories from the level

of the street, under the shops of Messrs. Buckle and Blackburn. The entrance, (marked E in frontispiece) was along a dark passage, opening into Ivesgate. The dungeon is said to have been divided into two compartments; one for male, the other for female delinquents. Each of these was little more than three yards square, and must have fully answered the sad description given by Nelson in his journal. The shops referred to above, then stood in a recess, and formed part of the shambles looking up Westgate. The upper part of the houses overhung the street,—the front resting upon pillars,—whilst underneath was the standing for butter sellers, &c.

NOTE C.

“Ebenezer Pyrah,—the Leader then appointed.”—Page 18.

Jonathan Pyrah, brother of the above, was for some time a soldier in the army, and served under the Duke of Cumberland in the Netherlands' war. With three hundred of his comrades, Jonathan became a member of the methodist society, then under the care of John Haime, a zealous preaching soldier, who subsequently entered the Itinerancy.

Of Jonathan, Mr. Wesley gives the following singular account in his sermon on Charity. See works, vol. vii. p. 52.

“A little before the conclusion of the late war in Flanders, one who came from thence, gave us a very strange relation. I knew not what judgment to form of this, but waited till John Haime should come over, of whose veracity I could no more doubt, than of his understanding. The account he gave was this. ‘Jonathan Pyrah was a member of our society in Flanders. I knew him some years, and know him to be a man of an unblameable character. One day, he was summoned to appear before the Board of General Officers. One of them said, ‘What is this we hear of you? We hear you are turned prophet, and that you foretel the downfall of the bloody house of Bourbon, and the haughty house of Austria. We should be glad if you were a real prophet, and if your prophecies came true. But what sign do you give, to convince us you are so, and that your predictions will come to pass?’ He readily answered, ‘Gentlemen, I give you a sign. To-morrow at twelve o'clock, you shall have such a storm of thunder and lightning, as you never had before since you came into Flanders. I give you a second sign: as little as any of you expect any such thing, as little appearance as there is of it now, you shall have a general engagement with the French within three days. I give you a third sign; I shall be ordered to advance in the first line. If I am a false prophet, I shall be shot dead at the first discharge; but if I am a true prophet, I shall only receive a musket-ball in the calf of my left leg.’ At twelve the next day, there was

such thunder and lightning as they never had before in Flanders. On the third day, contrary to all expectation, was the general battle of Fontenoy. He was ordered to advance in the first line, and at the very first discharge, he did receive a musket-ball in the calf of his left leg.'

"And yet, all this profited him nothing, either for temporal or eternal happiness. When the war was over, he returned to England; but the story was got before him. In consequence of which he was sent for by the Countess of St——'s, and several other persons of quality, who were desirous to receive so surprising an account from his own mouth.—He could not bear so much honour. It quite turned his brain. In a little time he ran stark mad. And so he continues to this day; living still, as I apprehend, on Wibsey-moor-side within a few miles of Leeds."

The battle of Fontenoy took place May 1st, 1745; within two years after which, Jonathan returned to his native hamlet,—a mental wreck. For a season, he had occasionally, lucid intervals, and with returning consciousness the Christian also beamed forth. Eventually however, he became the subject of fixed, ungovernable madness; the paroxysms of which were not perhaps at all alleviated by the treatment he received. In a small hovel, adjoining the work-house, cold and comfortless, the once idolized "prophet" was chained like a dog, till friendly death ended at once his degradation and his pain.

NOTE D.

" a somewhat rude yet touching Elegy, on the death of the celebrated Grimshaw,"—Page 38.

The following extract, describing Mr. Grimshaw as a preacher, may be regarded as a specimen of the whole:—

" 'Twas now, his heart ran o'er with peace and joy,
His eyes with tears;—and all his sweet employ
Was publishing the Saviour's worthy name,
And setting forth the honour of the Lamb.

And now, his soul felt sweet angelic fire;
His bosom glowed with love and strong desire,
To seek and save the wand'ring sons of men,
And bring them back to peace and rest again.
He knew the Christ he preached; he never dealt
In the base trade of preaching truths unfelt.
My muse, draw back the scenes of past delight,
And bring the man,—the wondrous man to light:

See, there he stands! the pious crowds among,
 Celestial eloquence flows from his tongue:
 Lo! on his reverend brow the frowns arise,
 And from his tongue the awful threat'ning flies:
 He tells the sinner what must be his doom;
 He thunders out the awful wrath to come:
 He treads self-righteous schemes to dust, and then,
 Knocks down the props on which poor mortals lean:
 And thus, with zeal divine, he tears away
 All but a Christ whereon to rest or stay.

But now his face a milder aspect wears,
 And conscious pleasure in his eye appears;
 He points the sinner to the Lamb of God,
 And tells the virtue of atoning blood.”

* * * *

NOTE E.

James Overend, of Calverley.—Page 63.

The name of this good man is here particularly noticed, inasmuch as it was in his house, and not at Calverley Hall, as stated in the life of Richard Burdsall, where that zealous, though somewhat eccentric preacher supposed himself to have been supernaturally disturbed. We give the following in Mr. B.’s own words, leaving the reader to form his own comment; simply premising, that the “old widow and her two sons,” were the mother of Overend, together with himself and brother.

About the year, 1766, Mr. Burdsall states,—“after this I had a call to Calverley, in the West-Riding of Yorkshire.

“In the month of January, when there was much snow upon the ground, and the weather very severe, I set out from home early in the afternoon, and preached at Calverley Hall about seven in the evening, to a large congregation. After preaching, I had a pleasant conversation with an old widow and her two sons. About twelve o’clock, I was shewn up one pair of stairs into a large room, surrounded with oak ceiling after the ancient plan, and there were some packs of wool lying on one side of the room. After my usual devotion I went to rest, and having slept some little time, I thought something crept upon me up to my breast, pressing me much. On this I was greatly agitated, and struggled to awake. In this situation, according to the best judgment I was able to form, the bed seemed to swing as if it were hung in strings, and I was thrown on the floor. When I came to myself, I presently got on my knees, and returned thanks that I was not hurt; also asking divine aid and protection for the time to come. After committing my all to the care

of the Almighty, I got into bed the second time. When I had lain about fifteen minutes, reasoning whether I had been thrown out of bed, or had only fallen out in my sleep, I was satisfied on this point, by being again thrown clearly out of bed upon the floor a second time, there being the same kind of motion, as if the bed was hung by four slings. I again resorted to prayer, and found that I had suffered no injury. The next step I took, was to creep under the bed to feel if there was any thing there, but I could find nothing. I then committed my all into the hand of God, where only safety can be found, and got into bed the third time. Just as I had laid myself down, I began to reason whether I was in my senses. I answered, yes, Lord, if ever I had any. I had not lain above a minute, before I was thrown out as before. I once more got on my knees, calling on the name of the Lord for his aid, and then crept under the bed again for satisfaction, to feel if the bed cords were fast; I touched all the four feet of the bed, but could feel nothing. After this, I put on my clothes, but did not offer to lie down any more. It might by this time, be about one o'clock in the morning, and for about six hours afterwards, I felt and experienced those words, 'we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' The reader may wonder at all this, but I do not; for although Satan be cast out, yet will he harass and perplex, when he hath leave given, but beyond his chain he cannot go; and though the all-wise God permitted him to try my faith, yet he upheld me, so that I could say, whilst thou, O Lord, art with me, I fear not if the room was full of devils: yet, I believe, so strong was the temptation, that I went many times to the door with a design to go down, and very often I was ready to call out, and alarm the house, but I refrained for the Lord strengthened me. Like the watchman, however, I longed to see the morning light, and had I been in a dungeon, fettered with irons, the thoughts of liberty could not have afforded me greater pleasure, than the hope of leaving this place in the morning. Therefore, when day-light appeared, I was glad to see the glorious sun rising above the horizon, discovering the fields and hedges with its beautiful light. I left the place early, and never visited that house since."

Memoirs of the Life of Richard Burdsall, Page 99, et seq.

NOTE F.

Regulations of Conference respecting the formation of separate circuits in the same town. Page 108.

QUESTION 26.—What regulations are requisite for the preservation of Christian harmony and order, and the due exercise of our

established discipline, in those populous towns and neighbourhoods where it has been, or may hereafter be found necessary to divide our Societies into two or more separate circuits, and thus to place them under distinct spiritual jurisdictions?

ANSWER 1.—In all cases it is to be considered as the standing rule of our connexion, that the preachers shall strongly *advise* and *encourage* the members of our Societies to meet in classes, which belong to the circuits in which they reside; and that the contrary practice, though it cannot in all cases be prohibited, is to be prudently and as far as possible discountenanced.

2.—Whatever relaxation of this general rule may be deemed expedient in particular circumstances, as to *private members* who reside in towns which are divided into different circuits, it is a settled and uniform principle of our discipline, that persons acting as local preachers, class-leaders, stewards, conductors of prayer-meetings, or exhorters, or sustaining any other office in our body, shall *belong* to the circuits in which they severally reside, and shall confine their *stated* and *regular* labours within the geographical boundaries of those circuits;—unless the superintendent of their own respective circuits, shall deem it advisable, in rare and extraordinary cases and for some special purpose, connected with the prosperity of the work of God, to consent to a temporary suspension of this principle.

3.—The preachers of different circuits, when resident in the same town, are advised to meet at least once in every month, for the purpose of mutual conference and prayer; in order to promote brotherly love, and to afford frequent and regular opportunities for friendly consultation on subjects of common concern in their respective circuits.

N.B. The regulations stated in the first and second articles of the preceding minutes, are founded on the obvious reason, that without them, no security can be obtained for the purity and good order of our body; because, in many cases, no efficient religious inspection could be exercised by the preachers, or by the local preachers' meeting, or leaders' meeting, in reference to the characters of non-resident members or officers, and thus the most dangerous violations or evasions of discipline might occur. It is also to be remembered, that as of old, when "the people had a mind to build," they "repaired every one against his own house," so Christians are bound especially and primarily to serve God and his cause, in those places where his providence has fixed the bounds of their habitation; "not pleasing themselves" nor "seeking their own profit" only, but cheerfully consulting, in all their religious arrangements and exertions, the edification of others, the order of the church of God, and the general good.

Minutes of Conference, 1827.

TABLES.

1. *Giving the Names of the Preachers who have been successively appointed to the Bradford Circuit, together with the Number in Society in each year.*

I.—BIRSTAL, INCLUDING BRADFORD, HALIFAX, &c.

| Year. | NAMES OF PREACHERS. | No. in Society. |
|--------|--|-----------------|
| 1765.. | John Murlin, Parson Greenwood, John Pawson..... | — |
| 1766.. | James] Oddie, Thomas Hanby, Daniel Bumstead, Mosley Cheek | 1376 |
| 1767.. | Daniel Bumstead, John Nelson, Thomas Brisco, Thomas Westell..... | 1491 |
| 1768.. | Christopher Hopper, Thomas Lee, Daniel Bumstead, Parson Greewood | 1476 |

II.—BRADFORD, INCLUDING HALIFAX, &c.

| | | |
|--------|---|------|
| 1769.. | John Oliver, Thomas Lee | 732 |
| 1770.. | Christopher Hopper, George Wadsworth..... | 807 |
| 1771.. | Thomas Hanson, John Atlay | 831 |
| 1772.. | John Atlay, John Morgan | 849 |
| 1773.. | Thomas Taylor, William Barker, Thomas Tennant.. | 900 |
| 1774.. | Thomas Taylor, William Brammah | 930 |
| 1775.. | John Allen, J. W. (Waldron), Samuel Smith | 1157 |
| 1776.. | John Allen, Thomas Lee, James Hudson | 1390 |
| 1777.. | Christopher Hopper, Joseph Benson, Thomas Lee.... | — |
| 1778.. | Christopher Hopper, Thomas Johnson, John Murlin.. | 1522 |
| 1779.. | Alexander Mather, Thomas Johnson, Thomas Brisco | 1541 |
| 1780.. | Alexander Mather, James Hindmarsh, John Fenwick | 1754 |
| 1781.. | Samuel Bradburn, John Floyd, John Oliver | 1830 |
| 1782.. | Samuel Bradburn, Thomas Mitchell, Joseph Benson.. | 1800 |
| 1783.. | Alexander Mather, Joseph Benson, William Dufton.. | 1709 |
| 1784.. | John Valton, Thomas Taylor, John Shaw | 1850 |

III.—BRADFORD.

| | | |
|--------|---|------|
| 1785.. | John Valton Supernumerary; John Shaw, Henry Foster | 1088 |
| 1786.. | William Collins, Samuel Hodgson: Thomas Johnson, Supernumerary | 1146 |
| 1787.. | William Collins, Jeremiah Robertshaw: Thomas Johnson, Supernumerary | 1128 |

| | |
|--|------------------|
| 1788.. John Booth, Samuel Hodgson: Thomas Johnson, Super- | |
| ernumerary | 1040 |
| 1789.. George Shadford, John Booth | 1075 |
| 1790.. John Allen, Jonathan Edmondson | 1085 |
| 1791.. John Allen, John Grant | 1095 |
| 1792.. Joseph Entwistle, John Grant | 1170 |
| 1793.. Parson Greenwood, Michael Emmett | 1180 |
| 1794.. Parson Greenwood, Michael Emmett | 1400 |
| 1795.. Robert Roberts, John Pipe: John Beanland, Super .. | 1430 |
| 1796.. Robert Roberts, John Ashall | 1460 |
| 1797.. Robert Hopkins, Thomas Harrison | 1476 |
| 1798.. Robert Hopkins, Thomas Harrison | 1580 |
| 1799.. Thomas Vasey, John Parkin | 1670 |
| 1800.. Lancelot Harrison, John Stamp | 1440 |
| 1801.. Lancelot Harrison, John Stamp | 1230 |
| 1802.. Francis Wrigley, George Snowden | 1228 |
| 1803.. James Rogers, George Snowden | 1210 |
| 1804.. James Rogers, Stephen Wilson | 1200 |
| 1805.. Alexander Suter, Stephen Wilson | 1280 |
| 1806.. Alexander Suter, George Gibbon | 1800 |
| 1807.. John Gaulter, George Gibbon, John Walton | 1850 |
| 1808.. John Gaulter, Edward Gibbon, Joseph Collier | 1900 |
| 1809.. Joseph Sutcliffe, Edward Gibbon, Joseph Collier | 1960 |
| 1810.. Joseph Sutcliffe, John Crosley, Edmund Grindrod | 2000 |
| 1811.. Thomas Bartholomew, John Kershaw, John Storry .. | 2100 |
| 1812.. Thomas Bartholomew, John Kershaw, Mark Day: Alexander Suter, Supernumerary | 1950 |
| 1813.. Richard Reece, John Nelson: Alexander Suter, Supernumerary. <i>Woodhouse-Grove</i> . Thomas Fletcher .. | 1854 |
| 1814.. Richard Reece, John Nelson | 1630 |
| 1815.. John Stamp, John Braithwaite | 1800 |
| 1816.. John Stamp, John Braithwaite, James Brook | 2100 |
| 1817.. Isaac Turton, Joseph Womersley | 1900 |
| 1818.. Isaac Turton, Joseph Womersley | 1780 |
| 1819.. Isaac Turton, David Stoner | 1700 |
| 1820.. Joseph Entwistle, David Stoner | 1720 |
| 1821.. Joseph Entwistle, David Stoner | 2090 |
| 1822.. Joseph Entwistle, John Rigg, George Tindall | 2340 |
| 1823.. John Hickling, John Rigg, George Tindall | 2540 |
| 1824.. John Hickling, James Townley, John Rigg | 253 ⁷ |

| | | |
|--------|--|------|
| 1825.. | James Townley, Robert Pickering, Thomas H. Walker, Thomas Walker, 2d | 2430 |
| 1826.. | William Hill, Robert Pickering, Thomas H. Walker, Thomas Walker, 2d: Matthew Lumb, Supernumerary | 2340 |
| 1827.. | John Slack, Thomas H. Walker, James Methley, Richard Felvus: Matthew Lumb, Supernumerary.. | 2424 |
| 1828.. | John Slack, James Methley, Richard Felvus, Thomas Dicken: Matthew Lumb, Supernumerary..... | 2550 |
| 1829.. | Joseph Hollingworth, Thomas Eastwood, James Meth- ley, Thomas Dicken: Matthew Lumb, Isaac Clayton, Supernumeraries | 2500 |
| 1830.. | Joseph Hollingworth, Thomas Eastwood, Henry Fish, Thomas Dicken: Matthew Lumb, John White, Isaac Clayton, Supernumeraries..... | 2500 |
| 1831.. | William Clegg, Thomas Eastwood, John Stephenson, Henry Fish: John White, Isaac Clayton, Super- numeraries..... | 2610 |
| 1832.. | William Clegg, Isaac Turton, Thomas Eckersley, John Stephenson: John White, Isaac Clayton, Super..... | 2616 |
| 1833.. | William Clegg, John Walmsley, Isaac Turton, Thomas Eckersley: John Lee, Isaac Clayton, Super..... | 2937 |
| 1834.. | John Walmsley, Isaac Turton, Thomas Eckersley, Jacob S. Smith: John Wheelhouse, Supernumerary... | 3114 |

IV.—BRADFORD-WEST.

| | | |
|--------|--|------|
| 1835.. | Philip Garrett, Benjamin Pearce, John Hobkirk..... | 1827 |
| 1836.. | Philip Garrett, Benjamin Pearce, John Walker: John White, Supernumary..... | 1827 |
| 1837.. | Philip Garrett, Benjamin Pearce, Charles Taylor.... | 1882 |
| 1838.. | Robert Pilter, William W. Stamp, John H. Beech.... | 1928 |
| 1839.. | Robert Pilter, William W. Stamp, Wm. Wilson, 4th.. | 2030 |
| 1840.. | Robert Pilter, William W. Stamp, Wm. Wilson, 4th : Stephen Wilson, John Wheelhouse, Supernumeraries.. | 2010 |

V. BRADFORD-EAST.

| | | |
|--------|--|------|
| 1835.. | Aaron Floyd, Charles Cheetham..... | 1266 |
| 1836.. | William Leach, Charles Cheetham..... | 1268 |
| 1837 | William Leach, Charles Cheetham..... | 1258 |
| 1838.. | William Leach, William J. Shrewsbury..... | 1290 |
| 1839.. | William J. Shrewsbury, Thomas Rowland..... | 1421 |
| 1840.. | William J. Shrewsbury, Thomas Rowland..... | 1539 |

TABLE II.—CHAPEL STATISTICS.

| CHAPELS. | When Built | Sittings to Let. | Free Sittings. | Total of Sittings. | Cost of Chapel & Trust Premises. | BRADFORD WEST. |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---|----------------|
| | | | | | BD. EAST. | |
| Kirkgate | 1811 | 1150 | 250 | 1400 | 12000 | |
| Abbey..... | 1838 | 400 | 350 | 750 | 1750 | |
| Centenary..... | 1839 | 300 | 120 | 420 | 1250 | |
| Great-Horton..... | 1814 | 500 | 150 | 650 | 3350 | |
| Low-Moor..... | 1809 | 380 | 260 | 640 | 1500 | |
| Clayton-Heights | 1807 | 425 | 25 | 450 | 1000 | |
| Clayton..... | 1834 | 270 | 130 | 400 | 850 | |
| Allerton..... | 1833 | 185 | 140 | 325 | 350 | |
| Wibsey | 1838 | 300 | 200 | 500 | 1000 | |
| Slack-Side..... | 1833 | 110 | 130 | 240 | 235 | |
| Total.... | — | 4020 | 1755 | 5775 | £23285 | |
| Eastbrook | 1825 | 1250 | 250 | 1500 | 10000 | |
| Bradford-Moor... | 1823 | 550 | 120 | 670 | 1450 | |
| Dudley-Hill | 1823 | 450 | 130 | 580 | 2250 | |
| Farsley | 1826 | 220 | 120 | 340 | 530 | |
| Calverley | 1832 | 180 | 100 | 280 | 400 | |
| Total ... | — | 2650 | 720 | 3370 | £14630 | |

TABLE III.—SUNDAY-SCHOOL STATISTICS.

| SCHOOLS. | Date | Teachers. | | | Scholars. | | | BRADFORD-WEST. |
|-------------------|------|-----------|------|-------|-----------|--------|------|----------------|
| | | Male | Fem. | Total | Boys. | Girls. | Tot. | |
| School-Street.... | 1808 | 17 | 23 | 40 | 103 | 114 | 217 | |
| Abbey..... | 1824 | 25 | 31 | 56 | 160 | 180 | 340 | |
| Centenary..... | 1840 | 36 | 34 | 70 | 164 | 156 | 320 | |
| Great-Horton... | 1820 | 56 | 52 | 108 | 118 | 111 | 229 | |
| Low-Moor..... | 1812 | 31 | 27 | 58 | 77 | 103 | 180 | |
| Clayton-Heights | 1831 | 32 | 33 | 65 | 52 | 95 | 147 | |
| Clayton..... | 1834 | 18 | 32 | 50 | 57 | 63 | 120 | |
| Allerton | 1828 | 24 | 15 | 39 | 39 | 37 | 76 | |
| Wibsey | 1818 | 46 | 42 | 88 | 150 | 168 | 318 | |
| Slack-Side..... | 1833 | 24 | 31 | 55 | 49 | 58 | 107 | |
| Bowling-Lane .. | 1823 | 32 | 54 | 86 | 60 | 103 | 163 | |
| Manningham.... | 1822 | 24 | 28 | 52 | 87 | 100 | 187 | |
| Heaton..... | 1814 | 17 | 19 | 36 | 43 | 61 | 104 | |
| Total ... | — | 382 | 421 | 803 | 1159 | 1349 | 2508 | |
| George-Street... | 1824 | 42 | 48 | 90 | 228 | 232 | 460 | |
| Park-Street..... | 1825 | 18 | 26 | 44 | 107 | 118 | 225 | |
| Seven-Stars..... | 1825 | 27 | 24 | 51 | 110 | 107 | 217 | |
| Spinkwell..... | 1840 | 24 | 24 | 48 | 98 | 85 | 183 | |
| Bradford-Moor.. | 1833 | 97 | 73 | 170 | 122 | 132 | 254 | |
| Dudley Hill.... | 1816 | 51 | 35 | 86 | 97 | 120 | 217 | |
| Farsley..... | 1831 | 63 | 45 | 108 | 83 | 78 | 161 | |
| Calverley | 1834 | 31 | 23 | 54 | 37 | 44 | 81 | |
| Total.... | — | 353 | 298 | 651 | 882 | 916 | 1798 | |

